THE PROBLEM OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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C O N T E N T S

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PREFACE

The problem of Northern Ireland, resulting from the antagonism between the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority is a major question which has engaged the British Government, and the people as well, since 1969. Despite various efforts, the problem eludes a solution. Although the origin of the present problem could be traced to the Act of 1920, which sundered Northern Ireland from its southern part, the problem assumed a serious dimension in 1969 when the Province witnessed widespread riots and killings. As the situation deteriorated further the British Government placed the Province under its 'Direct Rule' in March 1972, after dissolving the local Parliament. Since then, Northern Ireland was under the 'Direct Rule' of Westminster, except for a short period of 5 months from 1 January to 27 May 1974 when the Province had a power-sharing government. The main objective of this study is to examine the problem of Northern Ireland and analyse the turn of events related to it for a period from 1969 to 1981. This has been done by specially focussing the attitudes and responses of principal actors most directly concerned - the British Government, the Political Parties of Britain and Northern Ireland, and the Irish Republic - towards this problem.

While prosecuring this study, I received help from a number of individuals and institutions. First of all I would like to acknowledge the invaluable help I received, at all

stages of this study, from Dr. B. Vivekanandan, under whose supervision this work has been done. I owe my deep sense of gratitude to him. Similarly, I owe a great deal to my grandfather and parents without whose support I would not have been able to undertake this work. Also, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. B.P. Colegborn, First Secretary (Information), British High Commission, New Delhi, late Mr. E.O. Conghaile, former First Secretary of the Embassy of Ireland, New Delhi and Mr. Daniel Mulhall, the Second Secretary of the same Embassy, who had provided me with substantial primary documents. My sincere thanks are due to Mr. Pradip Bose and to all my friends for their help and inspiration throughout my work.

Finally, I have completed this study with the help of the primary and secondary source material available at various Libraries in New Delhi. In this connection, special mention may be made to the Libraries of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian Council of World Affairs, British High Commission and the Embassy of the Republic of Ireland. I am thankful to the Librarians and staff of all these Libraries for all the assistance they had extended to me.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Historical Background

The problem of Northern Ireland has posed a serious threat to the unity and integrity of the United Kingdom. It has become a matter of considerable importance not only for Britain but also for the people of Northern Ireland as well.

The roots of the present problem could be traced back to the 17th century, or even earlier, when Ireland became a prey to invasions by the Celts, the Vikings, the Romans and the English[1] who, until the 17th century, tended to mix with each other as people belonging to a single racial stock. The position had changed slightly in the early 17th century when the English and the Scots settled down in Ulster, mainly in Antrim and Down. As these new settlers were ardent Protestants they kept themselves aloof from the Roman Catholics. This was especially so, after the victory of William of Orange, a Protestant, over James II, a Roman Catholic, at the battle of Boyne in 1690.[2]

After the uprising in 1798, which was led largely by the disgruntled Ulster Presbyterians, Ireland lost its separate parliament. By the Act of Union (1800) Ireland was merged with the United Kingdom.

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1. Denis P. Barritt and Charles F. Carter, The Northern Ireland Problem: A Study in Group Relations (London, 1962), p. 8.

2. T.A. Jackson, ed., Ireland Her Own: An Outline History of the Struggle (London, 1976), pp. 82-3.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century there was notable increase in the size of the Catholic population. Between 1800 and 1830, the Catholic population had registered a rise from ten per cent to thirty per cent[3] in Northern Ireland. There occurred conflicts in the urban areas, caused largely by the competition for jobs and housing facilities, which paved the way for divisions on communal lines.[4]

Another significant development which took place in the nineteenth century was the Irish nationalist agitation for the re-establishment of a separate Irish Parliament, which led to the introduction of 'Home-Rule' in Ireland by the British Government in April 1885.[5] The introduction of 'Home-Rule' was strongly opposed by the Protestant Unionists, who lived mostly in Ulster (Northern Ireland). For the Protestants, the 'Home-Rule' was virtually a 'Rome Rule'.[6] However, in January 1913 an Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was formed[7] in order to oppose, by force, the imposition of 'Home Rule' in Ireland. The British government was in a weak position to deal with the resistance and, in 1914, the third Home Rule

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3. See Emrys Jones, A Social Geography of Belfast (London, 1960), p. 188.

4. John Darby, Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Development of a Polarised Community (London, 1976), p. 6.

5. T.W. Moody, The Ulster Question, 1603-1973 (Dublin, 1974), p. 23.

6. Maire and Conor Cruise O'Brien, A Concise History of Ireland (London, 1972), p. 131.

7. Ibid., p. 132.

bill was passed. The outbreak of First World War[8], partly kept the reaction to this measure obscure and allowed for a temporary solution by which six Counties, which subsequently became Northern Ireland, were excluded from the ambit of the Home Rule.

On Easter Monday in April 1916, there was a nationalist rising (mainly by the Catholics) in Dublin, which was known as the "Easter Rising", engineered by a small secret society called the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB). But this was finally suppressed.[9] With the suppression of the Easter Rising, the IRB which was basically Arthur Griffith's[10] organisation, lost its popular support. And Sinn Fein, which was the political wing of the Irish Republican Army, became a more popular organization.

In the aftermath of the British general elections, held in December 1918, the Sinn Fein candidates who were elected in 73 out of the 105 Irish constituencies, boycotted the parliament in Westminster and severed British connections. However, the growing Schism between the Protestants and the Catholics forced the British Government to move for a compromise.

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8. D.R. O'Connor Lysaght, The Republic of Ireland (Cork, Netherlands, 1970), p. 55 and also see Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 16, Moody, n. 5, p. 24.

9. Ibid.

10. Arthur Griffith (1871-1922) was a journalist who became the leader of the Sinn Fein. In 1898 he established a newspaper, the United Irishman, and plunged into organizing a political revival with a purely Irish dimension. Griffith was not a republican but was certainly a separatist; his ideal solution was a "dual monarchy" for Ireland and England.

Thus to resolve the impasse, it passed the Government of Ireland Act, 1920, which provided for the Home Rule parliaments in Dublin and Belfast, and formed the basis for the partition of Ireland.[11] The Act also provided for a Council of Ireland to link these two. The Council was to be composed of twenty representatives from each Parliament, and had the authority to discuss matters of mutual concern. But, soon this measure was superceded by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which made the Council of Ireland stillborn.

The Parliament in Northern Ireland (Stormont) was given jurisdiction over six Counties of Ulster, namely, Antrim, Down, Armagh, Tyrone, Fermagh and Londonderry, all of which had a Protestant majority and the Southern Parliament (Dail Eireann) had jurisdiction over twenty-six Counties with a Catholic majority.[12] However, both the Parliaments were given limited authority over purely internal affairs, and each was to continue to send representatives to Westminster. But, for the Southern Ireland, the Act never became effective.

Northern Ireland has an area of 5,542 square miles and has a 256 miles common border with the Irish Republic. At its nearest point to Great Britain, it is only 13 miles away from

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11. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (London, 1972), p. 101; and also see, Tom Bowden, "The IRA and the Changing Tactics of Terrorism", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 47, October-December, 1976, p. 428.

12. John Magee, Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict (London, 1974), p. 3.

Scotland across the narrow North Channel, though the shortest sea-ferry from Larne to Stranraer is 39 miles. It has a population of 1,547,300 (mid-1980) of whom two-thirds are descendants of Scots or English settlers who crossed to the north-east of Ireland mainly in the seventeenth century. Most of them belonged to the Protestant community. Their loyality has traditionally been committed to the maintenance of Northern Ireland's union with Great Britain. The remaining one third are Roman Catholics who, by and large, favoured union with the Irish Republic.

The armed struggle waged by the Irish Republican Army in the South led to a treaty between the British Government and Sinn Fein on 6 December 1921. By this treaty Britain granted Dominion status to the Irish Free State (twenty-six Counties).[13] But the Protestants preferred direct rule from London in lieu of a separate parliament for Northern Ireland.

It is significant to note that the Unionist had never demanded a parliament of their own. The first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland James Craig wrote in 1921, to Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; "It is necessary that I should call to your mind the sacrifices we have so recently made in agreeing to self-government and in consenting to the establishment of a Parliament for Northern Ireland. Much against our wish, but in the interests of peace, we

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13. Edgar O'Ballance, Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate (Novato, USA, 1981), p. 40 and also see Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 17.

accepted this as a final settlement of the long outstanding difficulty with which Great Britain has been confronted".[14]

The Treaty of 1921 between Great Britain and Sinn Fein representatives provided for a Boundary Commission to determine the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants and economic and geographical conditions. The three Governments (Great Britain, Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State) each appointed representatives. The Commission, however, was unable to satisfy the hopes of the participants. For Protestants the interests were substantial in Donegal, Carvan and Monaghan apart from the six Counties. They, thus, saw no reason to give up even an inch of the six Counties of Ulster, which they had previously occupied, and thus created obstacle for Boundary Commission to settle the issue (though the Commission recommended only minor changes). Subsequently, delegates from the Irish Free State gave up the fight after facing severe opposition from the other side.[15] In 1925 the three Governments signed an agreement which recognized the de facto border which had been drawn in 1920. In 1937, Southern Ireland adopted a new constitution, and in 1949, it left the Commonwealth and became a sovereign Republic and thus severed the remaining constitutional links with the United Kingdom.[16]

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14. Magee, n. 12, p. 11.

15. Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 17.

16. John A. Murphy, ed., Ireland in the Twentieth Century (Dublin, 1975), pp. 92, 124-27.

Ireland was partitioned not because anyone wanted it but because the British Government thought that the only possible way of reconciling the two rival groups - Nationalist (mainly Roman Catholics) who demanded self-rule and the Unionists (mainly Protestants) who wished to remain in the United Kingdom.[17]

For the Catholics, the job opportunities in Northern Ireland were rather limited. The north-eastern part of Ireland, which was heavily industrialised, were dominated by the Protestants. Even the new industries which were established with the government assistance were located in the areas where there were Protestant concentration. Therefore, the Catholics felt that they were economically deprived. They were called "niggers" who were deprived of political rights and who were denied proper housing, education and employment opportunities.[18] Not only that, when the Catholics were given full political status it further increased the Protestant fear. The growing population of Catholics also became a matter of concern for the Protestants.

Since 1921, Northern Ireland was dominated and ruled by the Protestant dominated Unionists. Though Northern Ireland was not a sovereign state and was very much part of the United

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17. J.C. Beckett, "Northern Ireland", Journal of Contemporary History (London), 1971, p. 121.

18. Mary Turner, "Social Democrats and Northern Ireland, 1964-1970: The Origin of the Present Struggle", Monthly Review (New York), vol. 30, no. 2, June 1978, p. 32.

Kingdom, limited powers were granted to its parliament to make laws for 'the peace, order and good government'. Its powers could be revoked any time by Westminster which had retained certain important powers like legislation concerning the Crown, defence, foreign trade, foreign affairs, postal services, income-tax, customs, air services, excise duties, etc.[19] Further, a convention was established that the internal matters of Northern Ireland would not be discussed at Westminster. Many Unionists also claimed that Stormont was sovereign except those matters which are reserved for Westminster.[20]

The function of Stormont was very similar to that of the Parliament in Westminster. The Governor was the Crown's representative appointed for six years. The Stormont had two Houses - the Commons and the Senate. The Commons had a strength of fifty-two members, elected for five years through the system of 'Proportional Representation' (PR) with single-transferable vote (as per the Act of 1920). This system was adopted in order to safeguard the interest of the Catholic minority. The Senate had twenty-six members, and enjoyed little power or influence in the Government of the province. Out of the total twenty-six members of the Senate, two were ex-officio members - the Lord Mayor of Belfast and the Mayor

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19. Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 37 and also see Magee, n. 12, p. 57.

20. Magee, n. 12, p. 58 and also see O'Brien, n. 11, p. 129.

of Londonderry. The other twenty-four members were elected by the Commons, by proportional representation, for a term of eight years (half of the Senate members retired in every four years). The Senate continues even if the Lower House remains dissolved. The Senate ceases to function only when the Province is placed under direct rule from Westminster. Apart from this, twelve elected members from Northern Ireland were sent to Westminster to represent the Province in the British Parliament.[21]

From the very beginning the system of Proportional Representation (PR) was opposed by the Ulster Unionists. Therefore, the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, James Craig, abolished the PR system in 1929, in favour of the British system of single-member constituencies (except for four university seats). Craigavon said:

> ... People do not really understand what result it (PR system) may cause when it comes to third, fourth, fifth or sixth preferences. By an actual mistake, they might wake up to find Northern Ireland in the perilous position of being submerged in a Dublin Parliament. What I hold is, if the Ulster people are ever going - and I pray they may not - into a Dublin Parliament, they should understand that they are voting a electoral system such as Proportional Representation. (22)

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21. David Butler and Anne Sloman, British Political Facts. 1900-1975 (London, 1975), edn. 4, p. 352 and also see Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 39, Magee, n. 12, pp. 61-62.

22. St. John Ervin, Craigavon: Ulsterman (London, 1949), pp. 516-17.

The abolition of 'Proportional Representation' system gave a firm hold to the Protestant Community through gerrymandering constituencies and forestalled the development of any opposition in Stormont and kept the provincial government firmly Unionist. But it created resentment in the opposition. This change in the electoral system was opposed by Nationalists and other non-Unionist parties. Nevertheless, it gave a new dimension to the politics of Northern Ireland in the sense that it kept the Unionists in power till 1972. The Unionists were also elected unopposed several times. In contrast the Catholics, who were really in a disadvantageous position, started feeling insecure.

The electoral system of Northern Ireland, though similar to Westminster, virtually gave a free hand to the Protestant majority. The electoral areas were determined by the Government, and, as set out in the first schedule of the 1920 Act, were intended to be permanent and unchanging but plural voting and university representation remained till 1968 in Northern Ireland. In fact the right to vote was linked with property status[23] which was known as 'business premises' qualification. It means that if a person has business premises of not less than £10 annual valuation was entitled to vote in constituency other than in which he resides (if he has several premises in several constituencies he can claim the

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23. Magee, n. 12, pp. 62-63 and also see Barritt and Carter, n. 1, pp. 40-41.

business premises vote in one only, according to his choice).[24]

Thus, it was obvious that the electoral system in Northern Ireland was favourable to the Ulster Unionist party, as the professional and business class were predominantly Protestant. Apart from this, a graduate had the voting right for the four university seats. The plural voting system and the university representation continued in Northern Ireland till 1968.[25] This situation made it impossible for the opposition to come into power in Northern Ireland. At the same time the Protestants also felt no need to obtain Catholic support for the governance of Northern Ireland.

In this content, the role of Sinn Fein and its militant wing 'The Irish Republican Army' becomes pertinent. Sinn Fein, which means 'ourselves alone', was founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith, who was opposed to socialism since he was afraid of the idea of class conflict. Since the beginning, Sinn Fein enjoyed little support among the masses, and was confined mainly to Dublin. In 1908 when it contested the Parliamentary seat from North Leitrim, it lost miserably. Therefore, subsequently, in the general election of 1910, it did not

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24. All property was subjected to a tax levied by the local administration and this valuation of property, i.e. £10, for the purpose of the tax was based on the valuation of the property in the mid 19th century and from time to time it changed.

25. Aleksander Prlja, "The Roots of the Evil in Northern Ireland", Review of International Affairs (Belgrade), vol. 20, no. 466, 5 September 1969, p. 10.

venture to put up any candidate.[26]

After the Easter-Rising (1916), Sinn Fein, played an important role when it won several seats from Redmondites in the by-elections of 1917.[27] In the general election of 1918, Sinn Fein candidates won 73 out of 105 candidates it put up for the House of Commons in Westminster. But the elected candidates had refused to take their seats at Westminster.[28] It led to the formation of Dail Eireann, which demanded a separate parliament for all Ireland.

The origin of the military wing of Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), can be traced back to the Fenians (founded in 1858) and its primary aim was to effect separation between Great Britain and Ireland by use of force and establish the Irish Republic. The IRA was formed in 1919 and soon it took over the leadership of Irish National movement. The IRA, which was regarded as the army of the Dail Eireann (Parliament of Irish Republic), began a guerilla campaign against the British. The British Government, unable to suppress the growing guerilla movement of IRA passed the Ireland Act of 1920, which gave them 'Home Rule' with two Parliaments. But the guerilla campaign continued till the British Government agreed for a cease-fire on 10 July 1921.[29]

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26. Edward Norman, A History of Modern Ireland (London, 1971), pp. 241-43.

27. Ibid., p. 263.

28. Murphy, n. 16, pp. 5-11.

29. Lysaght, n. 8, p. 66.

In the year 1969, the IRA was split into two and gave birth to two republican armies — the "Officials" and the "Provisionals". The "Officials" were more left oriented, sought a "united Socialist Republican Ireland achieved by a Marxist-style war of national liberation". And, the "Provisionals", basically a terrorist organization, sought to "unite Ireland and terminate British politico-military influence by means of the bullet and the bomb".[30]

Overseas groups, active within expatriate Irish Communities, particularly in the United States (Irish Northern Aid Committee), have sent financial and material support to the IRA, but this flow got diminished considerably in recent years. The Provisional IRA has also sought to obtain arms from sources in the Middle East.

The 50 years rule of Ulster Unionist party which remained in power till March 1972 has resulted in the widening of class divisions in Ulster, in which Orange Order and its institution certainly played an important role. Orange institution, which was outlawed, from the very beginning gathered popular support against the Home Rule, during 1880s, by supporting the Ulster Unionist Party. The Orange Order which was founded in 1795, became a movement for the labouring and the poorer artisan class protestants. It was a mixture of

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30. Tom Bowden, "The IRA and the Changing Tactics of Terrorism", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 47, October-December 1976, pp. 433-35.

social, secular, religious and political sects to keep an effective way of maintaining a united spirit among the 'protestant brethren' from all social classes.[31]

The ties between the Orange Order and the Unionist Party was also quite close. It was expected that a member of the Unionist party should also be a member of the Orange institution. It is interesting to note that of a total fifty-four Unionist members of the Northern Ireland parliament who joined the cabinet between 1921 and 1969 only three happened to be outside the Orange Institution. Of the remaining ninty-five Unionist party backbenchers in the Parliament, eighty-seven were members of the Orange Institution. And all the Unionists who were elected to the Northern Ireland Parliament remained loyal to the Orange Institution.[32] Orange men were so loyal to the Institution that the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, James Craig said on 24 April 1934: "I am an Orangeman first and a politician and a member of this parliament afterwards ... All I boast is that we have a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State".[33] John Miller Andrews (1940-1943), another Prime Minister of Northern Ireland said in 1941: "I am delighted

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31. Barritt and Carter, n. 1, p. 46.

32. Dublin, n. 4, p. 81.

33. Northern Ireland, House of Commons, Debates, vol. XVI, cols. 1091-1095, cited from John F. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party 1882-1973: Its Development and Organisation (Belfast, 1974), revd. edn., p. 137, and also see Magee, n. 12, p. 4, Darby, n. 4, p. 84.

to have behind me the great Orange Order".[34] In fact, it was the Orange Order which opposed any attempt for Unionist membership to the Catholics. But as it was observed by Clarence Graham, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council, in November 1959, when he said: "He could see no reason why a Catholic should not be selected as a Unionist candidate for Parliament".[35] The relationship between the two can also be seen from the fact that the Unionist Constituency Associations often met at Orange halls and they used those halls as their campaign headquarters. According to Lawrence Orr, an Orange man, and a member of Westminster Parliament in 1920: "without the Orange Order there would have been no Unionist Party and no Union. If the Orange Order and the Unionist Party were to be seperated, the Unionist Party would cease to exist as such".[36]

On the whole, the Unionist policies were confined to themselves through which they maintained dominance over the Nationalist minority. Basil Brooke, who was Minister for Agriculture from 1933 to 1941, and later Prime Minister, said on 13 July 1933:

> There are a great number of Protestants and Orangemen who employ Roman Catholics. I feel I can speak freely on this subject as I have

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34. T.J. Campbell, Fifty Years of Ulster, 1890-1940 (Belfast, 1941), p. 98.

35. Darby, n. 4, p. 87.

36. L. Orr, "The Orange Order", Solon, 1-2 January 1970, cited from Darby, n. 4, p. 85.

> not a Roman Catholic about my own place .... I would appeal to Loyalists, therefore, wherever possible, to employ good protestant lads and lassies. (37)

Later on, in March 1934, he said:

> Thinking out the whole question carefully ... I recommended those people who are loyalists not to employ Roman Catholics, ninety-nine per cent of whom are disloyal .... I want you to remember one point in regard to the employment of people who are disloyal. There are often difficulties in the way, but usually there are plenty of good men and women available and the employers don't bother to employ them. You are disfranchising yourselves in that way. You people who are employers have the ball at your feet. If you don't act properly now, before we know where we are we shall find ourselves in the minority instead of the majority. (38)

The introduction of welfare state in England after the end of the Second World War had changed the Unionist attitudes. According to the Act of 1920, Britain and Northern Ireland agreed that all British social reforms were liable to be implemented in Northern Ireland also.[39] Liberal elements within the Unionist Party thought that the introduction of the Education Act, 1947, would be beneficial to the Catholic middle class which would feel quite happy to settle down in a reformed Ulster state rather than asking for a united Ireland.

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37. Fermanagh Times, 13 July 1933, cited from Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Harmondsworth, England, 1970), pp. 114-15.

38. Londonderry Sentinel, 20 March 1934, cited in Ibid., p. 115.

39. Russell Stetler, "Northern Ireland: From Civil Rights to Armed Struggle", Monthly Review, vol. 22, November 1970, p. 16.

In November 1959, Clarence Graham who was Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council, declared that he could see no reason why a Catholic should not be selected as a Unionist candidate for Parliament. His idea was supported by Brian Maginess, the Attorney General, which gave the suggestion more weight. On this, George Clark, Grand Master of the Grand Order Lodge of Ireland, reacted sharply and within a week he delivered the verdict of the Orange Order:

> It is difficult to see how a Roman Catholic with the vast differences in our religious outlooks, could be either acceptable within the Unionist Party as a member or, for that matter, bring himself unconditionally to support its ideals. (40)

Lord Brookeborough, the then Prime Minister, also told a meeting of Young Unionists at Lisbellaw:

> There is no use blinking the fact that political differences in Northern Ireland closely follow religious differences. It may not be impossible, but it certainly is not easy for any person to discard the political conceptions, the influence and impressions acquired from religious and educational instruction by those whose aims are openly declared to be an all-Ireland Republic. (41)

However, the question of Catholic membership to the Unionist Party was not resolved and when in 1969 a young Catholic tried to secure Unionist nomination in Newry, his attempt was made unsuccessful. When Terence O'Neill came

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40. Belfast Telegraph (Belfast), 10 November 1959, cited from Darby, n. 4, p. 87.

41. Belfast Newsletter (Belfast), 21 November 1959, cited from Ibid., pp. 87-88.

to power in 1963, replacing Lord Brookeborough, he tried to make a bridge between the Unionists and the Nationalists. But he found it very difficult. James Chichester Clark, who replaced Terence O'Neill in 1969, also had the same outlook and he finally gave his approval saying that:

> I want to make it very clear indeed that, in the name of party, I welcome those Roman Catholics who wish to be associated with Unionism and support its principles - not just as voters, but as an active members with, of course, an equal right with all other party members to be considered for party office and all that flows from it. (42)

Early 1960s saw the wave of liberal Unionists who had tried to build bridges with the Catholics. In 1965 Terence O'Neill paid his first visit to a Catholic school for the first time, though, among the Protestants he became a paradoxical figure and for which he had to resign in 1969 due to his liberal attitudes towards Catholic community. He also invited the Prime Minister of Irish Republic, Seam Lemass, in 1965, and subsequently paid a return visit to Dublin. This was, of course, an attempt to build up a bridge between the north and the south.[43]

The role of anti-partitionist parties also assumes significance. It may be seen that till 1969 there were three main parties, i.e., Republicans (military wing of Sinn Fein),

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42. Belfast Telegraph, 14 November 1969, cited from Ibid., p. 88.

43. Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Hammondsworth, England, 1970), p. 146 and also see Darby, n. 4, p. 88.

Nationalist and Northern Ireland Labour Party. These parties have adopted both peaceful and violent means in their opposition to the partition of Ireland. Nevertheless, their origin may be traced back to the Home Rule struggle of the 19th century but they became more vocal only after the Act of 1920.

The political involvement of the 'Republicans' was seriously compromised by the refusal of Sinn Fein (the Republican political wing) to recognise the existence of the Northern state or its institutions.[44] They further advocated that if they were elected they would refuse to take seats in the Parliament, although they later modified their stand when a twenty-six County parliament was set up in Dublin. In the first election to Northern Ireland Parliament in 1921, they won six out of twelve anti-partitionist seats but lost four seats in the 1925 elections to Northern Ireland Parliament.[45] However, in 1955 Westminster elections, they contested twelve seats and won two. Thus, the changing political scene forced the Republican Party to adopt a militant strategy in later period. Nevertheless, the cardinal objective of the IRA movement on the whole remained a united Ireland. But the primary function of the IRA in Northern Ireland was to protect the Catholic areas against possible invasion. Since the basis of the movement was sectarian it got popular support

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44. Darby, n. 4, p. 92.

45. John F. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973: Its Development and Organisation (Belfast, 1974), revd. edn., Appendix A, p. 178.

in Belfast during 1920s and 1930s when the sectarian troubles were common. But, otherwise, they failed to gain any significant support from the Protestant community.

The 1956-62 campaign for Northern Ireland General Elections, produced radical changes in republican strategy[46], and raised social issues like housing, trade, unionism etc. - and simultaneously moved away from the strategy of use of force, and hence they gained non-Catholic support. In the civil rights movement of 1967, the IRA also tried to take every possible advantage but at last failed to assume its control. Nevertheless, it also failed to protect Catholic ghettoes from a programme organised by Protestant extremists and hence it was seen written on many walls - "IRA - I Ran Away".[47] The violence of August 1969 in Northern Ireland, however, brought sharp reaction against both the policies and leadership of the Republican organization, and thus there was two divisions - "Officials", which kept some supporters in Belfast, Derry and a few country areas, and the "provisionals", which became quite influencial in the North.

As by 1921 twenty-six of Ireland's thirty-two counties achieved Home Rule, the activities of the Nationalist Party

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46. Darby, n. 4, p. 94.

47. Gary Hicks, "Northern Ireland - The British Governments Legacy of History", Foreign Policy (Ankara), vol. 3, no. 2, June 1973, p. 84 and also Stetler, n. 39, p. 26, Magee, n. 12, p. 25.

were confined to the six remaining Counties of Northern Ireland. The Nationalist Party and the IRA both disapprove the existence of Northern Ireland as a seperate entity. But, the Nationalist's relative ineffectiveness was partly due to the nature of Northern Ireland politics and partly due to the party's own inactiveness and political short-sightedness. Joe Devlin, who dominated the Nationalist Party in 1920s and 1930s, gave a new approach to the party. He became the leader of the Nationalist Party just after the partition. Hailing from the working class background in Belfast and as one who also had controlled the Nationalist members in the Belfast city Council, Joe Devlin gathered support not only from organised Catholicism but also had close links with the ancient order of Hibernians - the counter part of the Orange Order.[48] The Ancient Order of Hibernians were very much similar to the Orange Order and fulfilled a somewhat similar function within the Catholic community. But it enjoyed little political influence.

Despite such support, the Nationalists could not build up a party organization and it was functioning solely on personal lines. Further attempts were also made to unite the anti-partitionist platform. But they failed due to personal quarrels. In 1928 the National League and in 1936 the Irish Union Association were formed and subsequently in

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48. Darby, n. 4, pp. 95-96.

the post-war period National unity was created by James Mc Sparran in 1959. Unfortunately none of these was successful. Though the Nationalist Party had a long term hope for gaining support from the Catholics, it rejected the idea of the use of force to attain their objectives. However, they failed to assume the role of a normal opposition in the Parliament for a long period.[49]

It was only after the formation of National Unity in 1959 that the party leadership was passed over to Eddie Mc Ateer who involved the party more in political debates. For the first time the party declared its policy at a conference in Maghery in 1964, and became the official Opposition at Stormont in 1965. Just after a year it held its first conference and published a party manifesto. Thus, gradually, they gained support in the country areas and were able to hold a majority of opposition seats. The emergence of Civil Rights Campaign created serious problems for the Nationalists since it had created a common front for the aspirations of many Catholics, irrespective of their political allegiances whether it lay with the Northern Ireland Labour Party, Republican Labour, Nationalists or the IRA. In 1968-69 the party was almost at its ebb.[50]

The Northern Ireland Labour Party in comperison with other anti-partition parties was more successful. In 1890s

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49. Ibid., p. 96.

50. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

there was first a coalition of socialist groups in Ireland as well as in Britain. But the unity was hampered by the conflicting attitudes towards the national questions. James Connolly, leader of Irish Independence movement and a Socialist, who presented the mixture of Socialism and Nationalism in a best way as an alternative to the British version, wrote, while in jail, that 'the Socialists will not understand why I am here. They forget that I am an Irishman'.[51]

The party maintained its non-sectarian line and won its first seats in 1925 in Northern Ireland parliament. It gave more emphasis on the socio-economic problems rather than border issue and for them partition was an open question. But their policy was not successful because there was constant pressure on the party to take a stand either for or against the constitution. During 1930s two leaders of the NILP, H. Midgely and J. Beattie dominated the party, though they differed in their attitudes. Midgely had a soft corner for Britain and the Commonwealth, whereas Beattie campaigned for Irish unity. Beattie's policy led him to his expulsion from the party twice during 1930s and his election as party leader in 1942. Following this, Midgely, left the party and attempted to establish a rival Commonwealth Labour Party, which ultimately failed. Later on he joined the Unionist Party. In the party conference of 1949 the NILP opted for British connection and

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51. Nicholas Mansergh, The Irish Question (London, 1965), p. 242.

in the election that followed, all NILP candidates were defeated. But, during 1950s, with the failure of IRA campaign, NILP enjoyed Catholic support. They won four seats in the elections of 1958[52], and became official opposition at Stormont. After 1965 they started losing their seats and they polled 10,519 votes less than in 1962, and in the process lost two of their seats.[53]

The decline of NILP was mainly due to two factors. The first was an internal split on tactics. One group which tried to gain support from among the protestant working class - led by David Bleakley and W.R. Boyd and the other group wanted to make a more direct appeal to the new Catholic voters - which was led by Charles Brett and Sam Napier. This had undermined the party unity. The other reason was Terence O'Neill's appearance with the support of the new British Labour Government. The electoral losses of the party in 1965 went in favour of O'Neill's Unionist and subsequently NILP's defeat in the local government elections in 1967.

The unbroken dominance of Unionist Party in Stormont was once threatened by the Civil Rights Campaign which was formed in February 1967 by various anti-partitionist parties, like Sinn Fein (the Republican Movement, of which IRA, is the military wing), the Nationalist Party, the Northern Ireland

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52. Harbinson, n. 45, Appendix A, p. 179.

53. Darby, n. 4, p. 100.

Labour Party, the Communist Party, and the National Democrats.[54] Though it was a non-political front, it had far-reaching implications. The main objectives of the Civil Rights Campaigns were: one man one vote in the local government elections; protection against discrimination in employment and housing; protection of the rights of an individual; codification of basic rights of all citizen; guarantee of the freedom of speech, assembly and association; disbandment of the B-specials and repealing of the Special Powers Act, and inform the public of their lawful rights.[55] The Civil Rights campaign gained mass support through public meetings and marches.

It is significant, however, to note that for the first time in the history of Northern Ireland, the Civil Rights Campaign had a united platform consisting of all opposition parties. Though the marches had to face the government's opposition which attempted to 'harry and hinder' all meetings, it is said that Derry saw the worst terror in 1968.[56]

However, in general, 1968 was the year of chaos and turmoil not only in Northern Ireland but also in other parts of the world. The year witnessed the students' unrest in

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54. Stetler, n. 39, p. 22.

55. James Callaghan, A House Divided: The Dilemma of Northern Ireland (London, 1973), p. 6, and also see Farr, n. 43, p. 165.

56. Betty Sinclair, "Northern Ireland", Labour Monthly (London), vol. 51, no. 10, October 1969, p. 459.

France, Red Guards demonstrations in China, troubles in Biafra, Spain, Yugoslavia and in Poland which also witnessed similar unrest and violence. It also witnessed the Russian occupations of Czechoslovakia. Wales, in Britain also could not escape from the attacks of extremist groups who used bombs and explosives.[57]

Northern Ireland witnessed two demonstrations in the autumn of 1968. The first, at Dungannon, was against anti-Catholic discrimination particularly in the allocation of houses. But, it passed off peacefully. But the second one was more acrimonious when the Civil Rights Association proposed a march through a Protestant area in Londonderry. The Protestant Apprentice Boys[58] also had intended to hold a march following a similar route and ending at the same place. William Craig, then Minister for Home Affairs, prohibited all processions in the waterside ward east of the River Foyle or within the city walls. Though the Apprentice Boys' march did not take place, it had a plan to obstruct the proposed Civil Rights march. On the other hand Civil Rights Association even after the ban marched right up to a police cordon which led to lathi charge.[59] According to O'Leary:

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57. Callaghan, n. 55, p. 7.

58. Protestant Orange Society based in Derry, dedicated to commemorating the action of Protestant apprentices, who in 1688, secured the city for the Williamite cause by closing the gates against the forces of James II.

59. Callaghan, n. 55, pp. 6-7.

> The Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was sparked off by demonstrations in support of the Polish demonstrations of the previous month, so the Dungeon protest led to the event of October 5 in Londonderry, with police baton charges and water cannon in plentiful supply. (60)

However, after the two Civil Rights demonstrations in 1968, the British government thought it necessary to intervene in Ulster. The Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill, wrote : "The long history of Anglo-Irish relationship warns that sudden intervention by the U.K. may produce effects which no one can foresee".

Owing to pressure from the Ulster's MPs, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, had talked to Terence O'Neill, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister in the first week of November 1968, regarding the Londonderry events, allocation of houses, special powers Acts, the local government franchise, and the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission for Administration in Northern Ireland. On 5 November 1968, Harold Wilson assured the Commons, that he had discussed all the major points with Captain O'Neill and had urged him to speedy action.[61]

But there was no encouraging response to this talk and when on 22 November 1968, O'Neill's reform package was revealed, it did not include the key civil rights demand of

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60. Cornelius O'Leary, "Northern Ireland: The Politics of Illusion", Political Quarterly, vol. 40, 1969, p. 310.

61. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 772, session 1968-69, col. 687.

one person - one vote, and promised to remove only those parts of the Special Powers Act which conflicted with international obligations, and this also would be only when it could be done without undue hazard.[62]

During his talk with Harold Wilson, William Craig, the then Home Minister, said that the housing allocation system was working smoothly and that there were not more than a dozen complaints in a year regarding housing allocations. Further, he said that there was no need of appointing an Ombudsman (the appointment of a Perliamentary Commission for Administration). He blamed the IRA, for playing a major role in the Civil Rights Movement and therefore, the repeal of the Special Powers Act was not advisable. And, hence, an inquiry was also not necessary for what happened in Londonderry in October 1968. He justified the measures taken by the Police, in Londonderry.[63]

Craig who had succeeded to convince the British Prime Minister that what ever had happened in the Civil Rights march the whole responsibility for initiating such type of violence lay with the IRA. However, the fact remains that the movement had the support of many Catholics as well as Protestants. Moreover, it would be incorrect to put the entire blame on the IRA for such violence since a similer role was played by the Orange Institution also.

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62. Turner, n. 18, p. 39.

63. Callaghan, n. 55, p. 11.

But Craig, by any reckoning had failed to convince O'Neill, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, who later on towards the end of 1968, dismissed him from his Home Ministership. Further, O'Neill appointed an enquiry commission, headed by Lord Cameron, to examine the 'causes' and 'nature of violence' in Londonderry due to four days protest march on Ist January, 1969. The Commission Report found that 'a number of policemen were guilty of misconduct and causing malicious damage to property'.[64]

Thus, it may be seen that the new state of Northern Ireland emerged amidst bloodshed. The Nationalist minority refused to recognise the new state and anti-partitionist MPs refused to attend the parliament also. The local government franchise system remained unchanged till 1969 and the extra votes for more than one property was a clear cut discrimination against the nationalist minority. The abolition of 'proportional representation' system in 1929 may be seen as another source of discontent among Catholics and this left them to believe that the safeguards against religious discrimination provided for in the Act of 1920 were in fact of little value.[65]

The Unionist policy which remained in operation for nearly fifty years was based on religious lines. And, they operated in such a way that the Roman Catholics started looking for a United Ireland under Dublin as the best solution.

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64. Ibid., p. 12.

65. Magee, n. 12, p. 13.

It would not be wrong to say that Catholics never enjoyed effective political or economic power. The Unionists on the other hand believed that the 'reunification of Ireland would bring religious and economic calamities on them.[66]

One point is very remarkable that despite the tripartite agreement of 1925, which led to the existing border unchanged, the successive governments in Dublin continued their demand that Ireland should unite and border issue should be brought to an end. This demand gained support in Northern Ireland and was kept alive for a long time among the Northern Nationalists, and also among the Roman Catholics members elected to Northern Ireland parliament, who advocated that the six Counties should be merged with the Irish Republic.[67] On the other hand the Unionists saw this development as a threat to their integrity and stood firmly together. Further, they maintained a Unionist majority through 'Housing allocation' and 'gerrymandering' the constituencies.

The Provisional wing of the IRA wanted a united Ireland, which they thought could be achieved by waging war against the British establishment. After the general elections of 1964, a number of Labour MPs at Westminster, like Stanley Orme,

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66. Richard Clutterbuck, Britain in Agony: The Growth of Political Violence (London, 1978), p. 131, and also see Sean Cantwell, "Northern Ireland: An Irish Viewpoint", Foreign Policy (Ankara), vol. 3, no. 1, March 1973, p. 108.

67. Beckett, n. 17, p. 129.

Paul Rose and Kevin Mc Namara tried time and again to focus the allegations made by the Catholics against the local authorities in respect of housing and public appointments. But their efforts were made infructuous by the Speaker's ruling that those matters were exclusively for the Stormont to decide.

The British Government's Green Paper, The Future of Northern Ireland, published in 1972, said: 'many members of the minority felt that they could not expect redress of grievance through parliament or through the constitutional safeguards which had been written into the Act of 1920'.[68] And when Catholics were unable to get their grievances redressed, they formed the Civil Rights Association in February 1967 which was a joint effort of all anti-partitionist organisations and through that they raised their voice. These developments were of course not of formidable importance to the Catholics, who looked increasingly towards Dublin, rather than to Westminster, and who had subsequently put forth the demand for Ulster's merger with the Irish Republic.

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68. Magee, n. 12, p. 13.

Chapter II

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

The British Government's prolonged policy of non-interference in the internal matters of Northern Ireland was broken in August 1969, after 48 years, when Britain sent its troops to Northern Ireland to suppress the growing violence in the Province. Since then, the aim of successive British governments all along has been to end violence and terrorism in Northern Ireland and establish peace through various political, social and economic reforms.[1] But these reforms could not be carried out due to local opposition.

The Civil Rights Association's march of 1 January 1969, demanding equal rights, especially 'one man one vote', led to violence in Northern Ireland. Though the Labour Government, which was in power then in Britain, had the intention to carry out the five-point reformation programme (see Chapter III for details), Terence O'Neill, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, failed to implement these reforms due to division in his own Cabinet. However, the Governor of Northern Ireland set up a Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Cameron, to inquire into the 'nature and causes' of the violence of 1 January 1969. And, this move was welcomed by the Labour Government in Westminster, headed by Harold Wilson.[2]

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1. Gary Hicks, "Northern Ireland: The British Government's Legacy of History", Foreign Policy (Ankara), vol. 3, no. 2, June 1973, p. 85.

2. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 776, session 1968-69, col. 658.

The Cameron Commission Report, published on 12 September 1969, found that 'a number of police-men were guilty of misconduct'.[3] It said that there was inadequate and unfair house allocation by the local authorities who had refused to adopt a point system in assessing priorities of need.[4]

James Callaghan, Home Secretary, announced in the House of Commons on 21 April 1969 that due to growing violence, the British forces were posted to protect the electricity, water and other public services installations in Northern Ireland.[5] However, shortly afterwards, Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, was replaced by Chichester Clark. But, the new Prime Minister too was unable to check the growing violence in the Province. Major riots took place in Londonderry and Belfast on 12 July 1969 and 12 August 1969 respectively, which led the British Government to send its troops to quell the violence and suppress the Civil Rights marchers.[6] However, in comparison, the 12 July riots were not so serious as the riots of 12 August 1969. The August riots lasted for five days and took the life of 8 people and injured 414 civilians, 226 policemen and one British soldier. The Commission, which was set up by the Northern Ireland Government, under Lord

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3. UK, H.M.S.O., Disturbances in Northern Ireland: Report of the Cameron Commission appointed by the Governor of Northern Ireland, Cmnd. 532 (1969).

4. See Appendix II for figures on Housing.

5. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 782, session 1968-69, cols. 32-40.

6. Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Harmondsworth, England, 1970), pp. 199-201.

Justice Scarman, to go into the details of the violence, found that 'protestants were the aggressors'.[7]

The British Government's main objective was to establish peace in Northern Ireland. Keeping this in mind, James Callaghan, after sending troops to Northern Ireland, proposed a number of reforms, which included the appointment of an Ombudsman to deal with the citizens' complaints, the establishment of a central housing authority, and to anti-Catholic discrimination in public employment, re-organization of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the abolition of the B-specials.[8] This was also known as the 'Downing Street Declaration'. Callaghan thought that these proposals would satisfy the Catholic Community. But the Unionists were opposed to the implementation of these reforms.

On 19 August 1969, a top-level meeting at 10, Downing Street was held, between Harold Wilson and Chichester Clark in which James Callaghan, the Home Secretary, Michael Stewart, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Denis Healey, the Secretary of State for Defence, Lord Stonham, Minister of State at Home Office, J.L.O. Andrews, the Deputy Minister of

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7. James Callaghan, A House Divided: The Dilemma of Northern Ireland (London, 1973), p. 16.

8. Andrew Boyd, Brain Faulkner And the Crisis of Ulster (Tralee, Republic of Ireland, 1972), p. 18. Ulster Special Constabulary, Commonly known as the "B" Specials, were those willing to do part-time duty in their own districts. This force is a long standing one and is designed to serve a dual role of providing something in the nature of a 'home-guard' or defence force and a reserve supplementary to the civil police.

Northern Ireland, R.W. Porter, Minister of Home Affairs in Northern Ireland, Brain Faulkner, Minister of Development also participated. The declaration issued after this meeting said:

> The U.K. Government reaffirms that ... without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland or from the provision in Section I of the Ireland Act 1949, that in no event will or any part thereof cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland. The border is not an issue.[9]

Following the talks between the British and Northern Ireland Governments on 19 August 1969, an Advisory Committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Hunt, was set up to examine the recruitment, organisation, the functions and the structure of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC). The Hunt Committee was appointed on 26 August 1969, and its report was published on 10 October 1969. The report suggested that RUC should be disarmed and USC should be phased out. Further, it recommended that the RUC should work on the pattern of British police with an independent police authority to control it. It also suggested that the B-Special (Ulster Special Constabulary) should be replaced by a part-time military force. This report was accepted by the British Government.[10]

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9. UK, H.M.S.O., Northern Ireland: Text of a Communique and Declaration issued after a meeting held at 10 Downing Street on August 1969, Cmnd. 4154 (1969), pp. 2-3.

10. Harold Wilson, The Labour Government, 1964-1970: A Personal Record (London, 1971), p. 697 and also see Edgar O'Ballance, Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate (Novato, USA, 1981), p. 124.

The British Home Secretary, James Callaghan, paid a visit to Northern Ireland on 9-10 October 1969 and asked Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Chichester Clark, to expedite his reform programme. Thus from September 1969 to December 1969, a number of reform bills were passed by the Northern Ireland Government to deal with the complaints of local departments and other public bodies. A Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, and a Commissioner for Complaints both completely independent of the Government, were appointed in 1969. A new central housing authority was established under the Housing Executive Act (Northern Ireland) 1971, to be responsible for all public authority housing and allocation. The allocation henceforth was made on the basis of a points system.[11] A Ministry of Community Relations was established to formulate and sponsor policies for the improvement of community relations and a Community Relations Commission independent of the Government, was set up to foster harmonious relations in the community under the legislation passed in 1969.[12]

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11. The point system is that there is a central housing authority which will ensure a complete absence of any discrimination or any charge of discrimination in housing allocation.

12. UK, H.M.S.O., Northern Ireland: Text of a Communique issued following discussions between the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Northern Ireland Government in Belfast on 9th and 10th October 1969, Cmnd. 4178 (1969), pp. 2-7.

Ian Freeland, the GOC, who was given the command of Northern Ireland, also warned the local Ulster politicians that they should show favourable attitudes in solving their own problems, as the army could not stay for an indefinite period on the street.[13]

However, during the middle of 1970, there was a change of Government in Britain. The Labour Government was replaced by a Conservative Government in the General Elections of 18 June 1970. As a result, Edward Heath became the Prime Minister, and Reginald Maudling became the new Home Secretary. It may be mentioned that so long as the Labour Government was in power, the Unionist Party in Northern Ireland had an uneasy relationship with the Labour Government. But, with the advent of the Conservative Party in power at Westminster, this relationship got smoothened. Thus, the Conservative Government supported their traditional ally, the Unionists, without having any clear-cut policy towards Northern Ireland.[14]

As soon as Reginald Maudling became the Home Secretary, the situation in Northern Ireland began to change rapidly. He gave full powers to the Ulster Unionists to curb the growing violence. Thus, the Unionists began to enjoy direct

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13. Betty Sinclair, "Northern Ireland", Labour Monthly (London), vol. 51, no. 10, October 1969, p. 460, and also see John Magee, Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict (London, 1974), p. 127.

14. James Stewart, "The Situation and Struggle in Northern Ireland", Marxism Today (London), vol. 19, no. 8, August 1975, p. 237.

control over the British Army in Ulster. And, within fourteen days, the Army swung into an anti-terrorist campaign against the IRA. The British troops also sealed off the Lower Falls area in Belfast and a curfew was also clamped down there.

The policy of the Conservative Government remained unchanged. Nonetheless, it could hardly check the growing violence. On 10 March 1971 three unarmed Scottish soldiers were taken from a pub at Ligoniel on the outskirts of Belfast and shot in the back of the head.[16] The Prime Minister, Edward Heath, on 22 March 1971 in a Parliamentary debate stated that:

> ... to maintain law and order to prevent communal strife and to root out terrorism, British Government will continue to support the Army with all the authority which needed to carry out the military measures judged necessary for the purpose.[17]

It was under these circumstances that Brian Faulkner became the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland on 23 March 1971. Indeed, he got the solid backing of the Conservative Government who was very keen to check the growing terrorism. With the consent of British Government Faulkner introduced 'internment' without trial on 9 August 1971. During Reginald Maudling's tenure as Home Secretary the internment camps were

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15. Andrew Boyd, "Quickstand of Ulster", Nation (New York), 3rd December 1973, pp. 594-95.

16. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 813, session 1970-71, col. 597 and also see Harold Wilson, Final Term: The Labour Government, 1974-1976 (London, 1979), p. 67.

17. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 814, session 1970-71, col. 36.

opened at Long Kesh and at Magilligen.[18]

The 'internment' led to the arrest of hundreds of people who were either Catholic Republicans or supporters of Civil Rights movement. Twelve people were shot dead, 150 houses were burnt and 337 people were arrested on the same day.[19] This mass detention without trial and 'physical brutality' aroused bitter public resentment. Subsequently, Reginald Maudling agreed to set up an inquiry committee under Sir Edmund Compton, to investigate the allegations, made by those arrested on 9 August 1971 under the Civil Authorities Special Powers Act (Northern Ireland) 1972, of physical brutality while in the custody of the security forces prior to either their subsequent release or their being lodged in a place specified in a detention order.

Though most of the allegations were proved in the report, the incidents of violence were regarded as "ill treatment" rather than 'physical brutality'. The more serious allegations which the committee was able to investigate were related to the subsequent interrogation in depth of 11 individuals. Here again the committee found no evidence of 'physical brutality'. The Government rejected the contention that "the methods currently authorised for interrogation contains any element of cruelty or brutality. The report of

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18. Andrew Boyd, "What if England Pulls Out?", Nation, 8 May 1976, p. 551.

19. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (London, 1972), pp. 275-77.

the committee also confirms this view".[20]

On 30 January 1972, the Civil Rights Association organised a march against 'internment'. The decision to continue the march within the Bogside and Creggan was successfully carried out despite the opposition of the Chief Superintendent of police in Londonderry. This led to massive violence in which thirteen Catholics were shot dead and sixteen injured.[21]

A Committee headed by Lord Widgery was constituted to enquire into the events of the 'Bloody Sunday' (30 January 1972). After the enquiry the Widgery Committee had come to the conclusion that:

> There would have been no deaths in Londonderry on 30 January if those who organized the illegal march had not thereby created a highly dangerous situation in which a clash between demonstrators and the security forces was inevitable .... For the most part the soldiers acted as they did because they thought their orders required it .... In the conditions prevailing in Northern Ireland, however, this is often inescapable. (22)

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20. UK, H.M.S.O., Report of the enquiry into the allegations against the security forces of physical brutality in Northern Ireland arising out of events on the 9th August 1971: Compton Report, Cmnd. 4823 (1971), pp. V-VI.

21. Harold Wilson, n. 16, p. 67, and also see John A. Murphy, ed., Ireland in the Twentieth Century (Dublin, 1981), Forth impression, p. 168.

22. UK, H.M.S.O., Report of the Tribunal appointed to inquire into the events on Sunday, 30 January 1972 which led to loss of life in connection with the procession in Londonderry on that day: Widgery Report, 18 April 1972, pp. 38-39 and also see Wilson, n. 16, p. 67.

However, Widgery Report caused resentment among the Catholic community.

On 24 March 1972, Edward Heath, the British Prime Minister, made certain proposals on Northern Ireland. Those proposals were: (1) in the hope of taking the border out of the day-to-day political scene, and as a reassurance that there would be no change in the Border without the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland, he proposed periodic plebiscites on this issue; (2) a start would be made on phasing out internment; and (3) the law and order issues should be transferred to Westminster.[23]

Though the first two proposals were acceptable in principle to the Government of Northern Ireland, Prime Minister Brian Faulkner refused to accept the proposal for the transfer of responsibility for law and order from Stormont to Westminster. He warned that if any such proposals were implemented, it would entail the resignation of the Government of Northern Ireland. But, the British Government was not ready to compromise on this issue and as a result the Government of Northern Ireland resigned. Northern Ireland was placed under the Direct Rule on 24 March 1972 as per the Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Act[24], of 30 March 1972, which prorogued the Northern Ireland Parliament and gave the British

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23. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 833, session 1971-72, cols. 1859-60.

24. John A. Murphy, n. 21, p. 168.

Parliament power to legislate over Northern Ireland. A Secretary of State for North Ireland was appointed to exercise the functions previously undertaken by the Northern Ireland Government, and with overall responsibility for the Northern Ireland department. Thus William Whitelaw became the first Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.[25]

Had Callaghan abolished the Stormont in August 1969, when the Ulster Unionists were defeated both morally and politically, and when it became clear with the resignation of Terence O'Neill from the Ulster Premiership that the intention of any government dominated by Unionist would be to obstruct and not to accept and promote Civil Rights reforms for Catholics in Northern Ireland, the situation would have been different.

However, following the introduction of the 'direct rule', continuous discussions were held between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, and representatives of all shades of opinion in the province about the future administative structure of Northern Ireland. These discussions culminated into a Conference at Darlington, on 25 September 1972. The Conference was attended by three of Northern Ireland's political parties - the Ulster Unionist Party, the Alliance Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party.[26]

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25. David Butler and Anne Sloman, British Political Facts, 1900-1975 (London, 1975), p. 354 and also see Richard Clutterbuck, Britain in Agony: The Growth of Political Violence (London, 1978), p. 133.

26. Ian Mc Allister, The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party: Political Opposition in a Divided Society (London, 1977), p. 120 and also see Wilson, n. 21, p. 70.

The outcome of the 'Darlington Conference' was published in a Green Paper, "The Future of Northern Ireland", in October 1972. Subsequent consultations held between the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and a wider range of political parties (including the Social Democratic and Labour Party - the main Opposition party representing predominantly, Roman Catholics) and other groups and individuals in the Province did not produce any single set of proposals for a constitutional settlement, but they did suggest the possibility that important aspects of such a settlement could be framed in a way likely to gain the acceptance of the Northern Ireland people as a whole.[27]

It was also stated that:

> The object of real participation should be achieved by giving minority interests a share in the exercise of executive power if this can be achieved by means which are not unduly complex or artificial, and which do not represent an obstacle to effective government. (28)

On 8 March 1973, a plebiscite on the border question was held under the provisions of Northern Ireland (Border Poll) Act 1972, in fulfilment of a pledge given by the United Kingdom at the time of the introduction of the direct rule. Every citizen of the Province aged 18 or over was asked to

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27. UK, H.M.S.O., Northern Ireland Office, The Future of Northern Ireland, 1972, para 40, 75, cited from Mc Allister, n. 26, p. 121.

28. Derek Birrell, "A Government of Northern Ireland and the Obstacle of Power-sharing", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 52, no. 2, April-June 1981, p. 184.

state whether he or she wished Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom or to be joined with the Irish Republic outside the United Kingdom. The result of the poll was as follows:

To remain as part of the UK	591,820
To join with the Irish Republic	6,463
Spoiled votes	5,973
Total electorate	1,031,633
Abstention vote	427,377

However, the SDLP and the IRA abstained from the voting.[29]

Shortly after the border poll, the British Government published (on 20 March 1973) a White Paper entitled, 'Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals'. The White Paper proposed that there should be -

(a) a Northern Ireland Assembly of 80 members elected by the single transferable vote method of proportional representation, applied to twelve Westminster constituencies. The new legislature will be designed to create a strong link between the Assembly and the Executive so that it include representatives of both the minority and the majority. It was envisaged that a member of the Assembly will act as the head of each Department of Northern Ireland. The Executive will be collectively formed by the heads of the each Department, like

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29. Betty Sinclair, "Northern Ireland", Labour Monthly, April 1973, and also see The Times (London), 10 March 1973.

education, agriculture etc. of Northern Ireland.

(b) There will continue to be a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He will undertake the necessary consultation leading to the devolution of powers, administer certain services reserved to the United Kingdom Government and be responsible for British interests in Northern Ireland. The devolution of powers after the formation of an Executive which can no longer be solely based upon one single party[30], will solely remain with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

(c) Certain reserved matters like the 'law and order' will remain with Westminster. However, the Assembly after a devolution of powers, will be able to legislate in respect of most matters affecting Northern Ireland.[31]

(d) The White Paper also proposed additional safeguards to protect the rights of the whole community and of groups within it, and recognised the existence of what was termed "the Irish Dimension" - i.e., the community of interests that existed between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland.[32]

These new constitutional arrangements were subsequently incorporated in the Northern Ireland Assembly Act, 1973, and

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30. Brian Faulkner, ed., Memoirs of a Statesman (London, 1978), p. 188.

31. UK, H.M.S.O., The White Paper on a Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals, Cmnd. 5259 (1973), pp. 10-12.

32. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

the Northern Ireland Constitution Act, 1973. The White Paper proposals became law on 18 July, 1973 which abolished the post of Governor and the parliament of Northern Ireland. It replaced the Government of Ireland Act, 1920.

In the meantime, while the constitutional arrangements for the administration of the province were being worked out, the reorganisation of local government was going ahead. Elections to the Northern Ireland Parliament had always been based on universal adult suffrage but the local Government franchise was based on property qualifications. Under the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 the principle of universal adult suffrage was introduced for local government elections and voting age for all elections was reduced from 21 to 18. Under local government reorganisation introduced in 1973, the existing 73 local authorities were replaced by 26 new District Councils. Elections to the 26 new District Councils (in which there were 1,222 candidates generally representing 17 political parties) were held on 30 May 1973 under single transferable vote system.[33] The new arrangements for local government came into operation in October, 1973.

In general the proposals received the fullest measure of acceptance from the centre parties of Northern Ireland: the Alliance Party, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and the Liberal Party. The attitude of the SDLP was quite

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33. John Magee, Northern Ireland - Crisis and Conflict (London, 1974), p. 177.

critical, but the party did consider that the proposals offered some hope for the future, both in building a new Northern Ireland and in forging closer links with the Republic. The District Councils election was followed by Assembly elections on 28 June, 1973, which was conducted by the single transferable vote method of proportional representation for 78 Assembly seats, distributed among 12 Northern Ireland Westminster constituencies. The result gave the 'pro-White Paper' Unionist Party, which had more or less agreed to Britain's Power-Sharing scheme, 24 seats; the SDLP 19; 'anti-White Paper' Unionist and other 'loyalist' groups 26 (the largest group returned to the Assembly) which was an alliance of Protestant militants whose aim was to reject the Power-Sharing government with Catholics and make the Assembly unworkable, the Alliance Party 8, and the Northern Ireland Labour Party 1.[34]

On 29 August 1973 Prime Minister Edward Heath visited Belfast and addressed the people of Northern Ireland. He said:

> The Northern Ireland Constitution Act is now the law of the land and you have elected representatives. It is their work to form an executive and take over the powers which the Westminster Parliament has shown itself prepared to hand over to them .... I realise full well that we are asking much of the parties of the Assembly to work together in the interest of the whole community of Northern Ireland .... Although at the moment responsibility for security is being kept at Westminster, the Executive will of

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34. Merlyn Rees, "Northern Ireland 1974", Contemporary Review (London), vol. 224, no. 1297, February 1974, p. 57, and also see Boyd, n. 15, p. 596.

> course be able to discuss these problems with the Secretary of State .... At the same time the Government in Westminster and Dublin, together with the Northern Ireland Executive can get on with working out the machinery, in the form of developing ministers, to meet the requirements of the Irish Dimension to which Her Majesty's Government has pledged itself. (35)

In October 1973 talks began between the leaders of the Official Unionist Party (which was 'pro-White Paper) and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on the possibility of forming a Power-Sharing Executive. On 21 November, 1973 they agreed to form an administration for Northern Ireland.

Though several attempts to find a peaceful solution for the problem of Northern Ireland were made by the British Government, they were foiled by the local political parties or by the two communities - the Protestants and the Catholics. However, the 'Sunningdale Agreement' (6-9 December 1973) was a landmark in the history of Northern Ireland. These tripartite talks between the leaders of the Northern Ireland parties in the Executive designate, and the ministers of Britain and the Irish Republic led to the agreement on power-sharing between the representatives of both sections of the community in Northern Ireland. This was the right move taken by the Conservative government to give political courage to the local political parties, during its last phase of its tenure

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35. Statement by the Prime Minister, Edward Heath to the people of Northern Ireland, on a visit to Belfast, 29 August 1973, Irish Times (Dublin), 30 August 1973, cited from Magee, n. 33, p. 180.

in office.[36]

The main points in the agreement were: (a) that a Council of Ireland composed of seven ministers from the Irish Republic and the seven members of the Northern Ireland Executive, a Consultative Assembly and a Secretariate, assisted by 30 members each from the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Dail, should be set up; and (b) that Britain and the Irish Republic should register solemn declarations with the United Nations to the effect that the status of Northern Ireland could not be changed without the consent of a majority in the province; (c) that, an Anglo-Irish Commission of Jurists would examine proposals for dealing with fugitive offenders and make recommendations; (d) the British government promised 'to bring detention to an end in Northern Ireland for all sections of the community as soon as the security situation permits'.[37] The British Prime Minister, Edward Heath welcomed this move and said that this agreement was "a very considerable achievement".[38]

On 31 December, 1973, the Power-Sharing administration was sworn in in Belfast and assumed office on 1 January 1974,

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36. John Hume, "The Irish Question: A British Problem", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol. 58, no. 2, Winter 1979/80, p. 302 and also see Wilson, n. 21, p. 70.

37. Edgar O'Ballance, Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate (Novato, U.S.A., 1981), p. 192 and also see Mc Allister, n. 26, p. 131.

38. Facts on File (New York), 9-15 December 1973, p. 1028.

with Brian Faulkner as the Chief Executive and Gerard Fitt, leader of the SDLP, as his deputy. But this power-sharing government could not last long and when, on 28 February 1974, the Labour Government came to power it failed to maintain peace in Northern Ireland. Merlyn Rees, who replaced Francis Pym as the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in March 1974, said that he would follow the policy of the outgoing Government and asserted, in a major debate on the Ulster situation on 4 April 1974, that:

> When we were in Opposition we supported the previous administration in its policies. We had our differences, but on all matters of principle there was all-party support for the Government of the day. It is our aim to maintain this approach towards Northern Ireland in this Parliament. Our policies will be firmly based on those of our predecessors in office .... (39)

Nonetheless, the Power-Sharing Executive which William Whitelaw so painstakingly established at the Sunningdale Conference in December, 1973, was over thrown by Ulster Workers Council (which had been established in 1973 following the collapse of the Loyalist Association of Workers), on 29 May 1974, when they organised a general strike which paralysed the economic life in Northern Ireland.[40] However, the Labour

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39. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 871, session 1973-74, col. 1463.

40. Richard Clutterbuck, Britain in Agony: The Growth of Political Violence (London, 1978), pp. 136-43 and also see J. Bowyer Bell, "The Chronicles of Violence in Northern Ireland: A Tragedy in Endless Acts", Review of Politics (Notre Dame), vol. 38, no. 4, October 1976, p. 511.

Government did not make similar effort as the Conservatives had shown. Had Merlyn Rees gone for the negotiation with Ulster Workers' Council (UWC), when Brian Faulkner advised him to open a "dialogue" with the strike leaders, the situation could have been different. Instead, in a televised speech on 25 May 1974 British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, called them (UWC) as "thugs" and "bullies".[41]

Though on 4 April 1974, the British Labour Party had outlined a new programme for Northern Ireland, which included the phased release of prisoners held without trial in Northern Ireland; removal of the ban on the Protestant Ulster Volunteer Force and the Sinn Fein, the IRA's political arm; recruitment of more Catholics in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Ulster's overwhelmingly Protestant Police force; and immediate assignment of extra troops for a major operation to prevent movement of arms and explosives into the Province.[42]

On 4 July 1974, shortly after the introduction of direct rule, the Government published another White Paper, '<u>The Northern Ireland Constitution</u>', containing new proposals which were subsequently enacted as part of the Northern Ireland Act 1974. This Act provided for a Constitutional Convention of 78 members to be elected on a multi-member basis from the 12 parliamentary constituencies by the single transferable

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41. <u>Facts on File</u>, 1 June 1974, p. 431.

42. Ibid.

vote method of proportional representation "to consider what provision for the Government of Northern Ireland is likely to command the most widespread acceptance among the community there".[43]

The Act also provided that the Convention should have an independent Chairman[44] and decided upon its own procedure; that the Convention should produce a report (or reports) on its conclusions to the Secretary of State who in his turn would lay it before the Parliament; and that the Convention should be dissolved on the date when the final report was delivered, or six months after the first meeting of the Convention, whichever was the earlier. In order to help the members of the Convention in their deliberations, the United Kingdom Government published three discussion papers on the main issues requiring consideration.

The Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved at the end of March 1975 and elections to the Convention were held in early May. The United Ulster Unionist Council, whose head was Ernest Baird, comprised of the Official Unionists, the Vanguard Unionist and the Democratic Unionist Party, won 46 out of the 78 seats. The number of seats won by each party was as follows: Official Unionist 20, Vanguard Unionist 14, Democratic Unionist party 12, Independent Unionist party 1,

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43. UK, H.M.S.O., The Northern Ireland Constitution, Cmnd. 5675 (1974), p. 17.

44. The appointment of the Chairman (Sir Robert Lowry, a former Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland) was announced in March 1975.

Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (Mr. Faulkner's Party) 5, SDLP 17, Alliance Party 8, and Northern Ireland Labour Party 1.[45]

Meanwhile Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, asked political parties and other bodies for their views about the future shape of the authority, and said that his choice would reflect the Government's hope of increasing the acceptability of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The Constitutional Convention began its work later in May 1975 but basic differences of opinion arose, particularly between the UUUC and the SDLP. The Convention was dissolved in November 1975 after voting that the recommendations of the UUUC should be presented to the Secretary of State as the Convention's final report, but unfortunately, it was rejected by the SDLP. The Convention was reconvened in January 1976 to consider certain specific measures referred to it by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, but was dissolved in March 1976 when it became clear that there was no prospect of agreement between the parties and that compromise was impossible.[46]

Following the final dissolution of the Constitutional Convention the Government concluded that a period of constitutional stability was needed to tackle the Province's economic

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45. Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 10 May 1975.

46. Northern Ireland Constitutional Convention, Report of Debates, February 3 to March 3, 1976 (Belfast, 1976), cited from Birrell, n. 28, 186-87.

and security problems, although the aim was still for a developed system of government in Northern Ireland. Direct rule, as provided for in the Northern Ireland Act 1974, was renewed for the second time in July 1976 (and subsequently for further periods of a year in July 1977 and June 1978 and again after 1978 till September 1982 it was renewed annually). Talks between the political parties in the latter part of 1976 showed that there was agreement on the principle of devolution and the Government reaffirmed on many occasions that its objective was for a stable and durable form of developed and devolved government which commanded the support of the vast majority of the population.

In June 1978 the British Government again outlined the five criteria: (a) there should be a single Assembly, elected by proportional representation; (b) that the Assembly should exercise real responsibility over a wide range of functions and have a consultative role in legislation; (c) the arrangements should be temporary and envisage progress to full legislative devolution; (d) although temporary, they must be durable which means that minority interests must be safeguarded and that Northern Ireland political parties must be prepared to make them work; (e) they must make good administrative sense.

On 3 May 1979 the Conservative Government came to power in Britain and Roy Mason was replaced by Humphrey Atkins. Direct rule continued only in the absence of agreement within

Northern Ireland on a form of devolved government. However, Humphrey Atkins, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said in the House of Commons on 2 July 1979:

> Direct rule is not the best way of administering the affairs of Northern Ireland. It was designed only as an interim agreement, a stop-gap .... The Government do not want direct rule to continue any longer than is strictly necessary. It is my earnest wish to see it replaced by a form of government which will ... give to the people of Northern Ireland more control over their own affairs .... (47)

To replace direct rule the Conservative Government took a new initiative for its political solution and on 25 October 1979 the Secretary of State, Humphrey Atkins, announced that the Government would put to Parliament at an early date proposals for transferring some of the power to locally-elected representatives of the government in Northern Ireland, which will then exercised from Westminster. Also there would be "reasonable and appropriate arrangements to take account of the interests of the minority". In this content the Government published a White Paper[48], The Government of Northern Ireland - A Working Paper for a Conference, in November 1979. It was stated in this White Paper that the proposed Conference would be concerned with the transfer of power within the United Kingdom but it would not discuss issues like 'Irish Unity',

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47. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 969, session 1979-80, cols. 926-27.

48. A "White Paper" is a statement of government policy, and a "Green Paper", outlines government thinking and is for discussion.

or 'Confederation' or 'Independence'. However, this White Paper proposed a conference of the main political parties to try to reach the highest level of agreement on a transfer of powers to locally elected representatives. While the Government stated its willingness to recommend to Parliament any workable transfer of powers which might be accepted or acceptable to the people of Northern Ireland as a whole. It said that a new pattern must be sought which would take full account of the needs and anxieties of both sides of the community.[49]

The 1979 White Paper had set out an agenda for the Conference under three headings: (i) the nature of the devolved Institutions; (ii) the powers to be devolved and (iii) the ways of safeguarding the interests of the minority. The institutions issue was related to the usual devolution agenda the method of Election, the nature of the Legislature and the Executive and the type of committee system; advisory or investigative. On the question of powers to be transferred, it asked whether these should be like 1973 Constitution, i.e. similar to Stormont's range of devolved powers, excluding security and law and order. Alternatively, a more limited range of functions could be devolved, for example, the subjects devolved could be restricted to those that is the responsibility of local authorities in Great Britain. The second issue was related to the extent to which powers should be transferred.

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49. UK, H.M.S.O., The Government of Northern Ireland: A Working Paper for a Conference, Cmnd. 7763 (1979), pp. 2-3.

In this regard three broad possibilities were identified: (a) the transfer of all executive and legislative powers; (b) the transfer of all executive powers; (c) and the transfer of only those executive powers which were exercised by local authorities in Great Britain. The third option (c), raised the possibility of dividing the province into two or more geographical areas to exercise this range of powers, in effect a form of local government. It had been assumed in the years before 1979 that the Conservatives were planning a definite proposal to introduce some system of local government as an alternative to a devolved regional government.[50]

On the role of the minority, this White Paper's views were once again a restatement of the views expressed since 1972, and some of the ideas discussed as possible means of recognising the interest of the minority were similar to those put forward in the 1974 White Paper. Thus there were proposals for weighted votes in a legislative or weighted votes in an Upper House or for a veto by the Secretary of State at the instance of a stated minority of members. However, the nature and extent of Minority participation in decision-making were classified into three categories:

(a) by appointment, recognising certain criteria, as in 1973;

(b) in proportion to party strengths in the elected body (Assembly);

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50. Ibid., pp. 5-8.

(c) by election either by the assembly or by the electorate as a whole.[51] An alternative form of minority participation was also put forward. If executive powers resided in committees, each with responsibility for certain subjects, minority participation could take the form of a share of chairmanships and/or seats on committees.

Table - I[52]

Institutions	Powers	Role of the Minority
Model A		
Single Chamber Assembly. Cabinet Government formed by largest party. Select Committees.	Full range of powers similar to 1973 Act excluding law and order.	Executive and Legislative subject to weighted majority. 50 per cent of select committee Chairmanships and membership.
Model B		
Bicameral System. Cabinet Government formed by largest party. Select Committees.	Full range of powers similar to 1973 Act excluding law and order.	Equal/large representation in senate and/or weighted majority in Senate.
Model C		
An Assembly with a system of Executive Committees. Chairman to act as Ministers.	Full range of powers similar to 1973 Act excluding law and order.	Chairmanship and Committee members allocated on a proportionate basis or use of special representation or weighted majority.

51. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

52. Ibid., pp. 12-20.

Institutions	Powers	Role of the Minority
Model D		
Elected Council. A system of Executive Committees.	Executive functions of Northern Ireland Department.	Chairmanship and Committee members allocated on a proportionate basis or use of special representation or weighted majority.
Model E		
Elected Council. An Executive based on a Cabinet system. Select Committees.	Executive functions of Northern Ireland Departments.	Executive subject to vote by weighted majority. 50 per cent representation in Committee Chairmanships and Committee membership.
Model F		
Elected Council or Councils linked with functional Committees.	Responsibilities similar to local government in England.	Allocation of Chairmanship and membership of Committee on a proportionate basis. Special representation or decisions by weighted majority

In the 1979 Working Paper, six examples of different forms of government were given which were reminiscent of the 1974 White Paper on Devolution within the United Kingdom. The models incorporated had three major facets: the form of institutions, the powers to be exercised and the role of the minority and their main features are outlined in Table 1.

In January 1980 Atkins chaired a conference to which the four main political parties in Northern Ireland (Democratic

Unionist Party, the Alliance Party, SDLP and Official Unionist Party) were invited in which three accepted to attend the Conference to resolve the crisis (except OUP). The purpose of the Conference, which was opened on 7 January 1980 and was adjourned on 24 March, was to identify the highest possible level of agreement on the way in which powers might be transferred from Westminster to the locally elected representatives in Northern Ireland. But the Conference failed to reach on any agreement on a future system of government for Northern Ireland.

However, in the light of the deliberations at the Conference, the Government published on 2 July 1980, a discussion paper, The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion, which argued that Northern Ireland needed workable and stable political institutions with the consent of the minority community. It stated that the development of new political arrangements in Northern Ireland must rest on the following foundations: "the minority community should be confident that Northern Ireland cannot be separated from the rest of the United Kingdom without the consent of a minority of its people; the minority community should accept and respect that fact; and in response the majority should ensure a positive role for the minority community in arrangements for the government of Northern Ireland. And it is in the interests of both communities to recognize and develop the links that exist between Northern Ireland and the Republic of

Ireland".[53]

However, the discussion paper noted that there was substantial agreement on many issues like the form of locally elected administration, a unicameral assembly, proportional representation elections, the range of devolved powers, the office of Secretary of State and safeguards against discrimination, etc. This, however, did not apply to one crucial issue, how provision should be made for the participation of representatives of the minority community in the Government. The last part of the discussion paper dealt with the suggestions for the involvement of the minority community.

Two options included in the discussion paper to safeguard the interests of the minority in the exercise of authority in Northern Ireland were: (i) a system which guaranteed any party, winning a certain proportion of the popular vote, a seat in the Executive; and (ii) the formation of an Executive by reference to the strength of the parties elected to an Assembly or the possible direct election of an Executive, which means a Power-Sharing government.

The Government's arguments for it were that "if the adoption of a system which ensured that the minority community had places on the Executive would crucially affect the attitude of the minority towards acceptance of the political institutions of Northern Ireland, then that constitutes a powerful reason

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53. UK, H.M.S.O., The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion, Cmnd. 7950 (1980), p. 5.

why the majority community should put aside its misgivings and accept a system of a proportionately constituted executive".[54]

Table - 2[55]

Institutions	Powers	Role of the Minority
Model A		
Model A (Responsibility shared within the executive)		
Single Assembly Cabinet. Departmental Committees.	Full range of powers similar to 1973	Membership of the Executive
Model B		
Model B (Responsibility shared within the Assembly)		
Single Assembly, Cabinet Departmental Committees. Council of the Assembly.	Full range of powers similar to 1973.	Membership of a Council of the Assembly with blocking powers.

In the Model A, the minorities were given the membership of the Executive, but in Model B, they were refrained from the membership of the Executive. Nevertheless, it was suggested that the minority without being represented in the Executive could share responsibility for the administration

54. Ibid., p. 12.

55. Ibid., pp. 11-14.

and to see that the interests of the minority community were adequately reflected in the decisions of the government. In the Model B, it was also proposed a Council of the Assembly with an equal number between those supporting and those opposing the Executive. Further, the Council would consist of the Chairman of departmental committees. The Council have the power to delay, refer back or block the proposed legislation, or the power to approve public expenditure.

It was pointed out that the proposed system could not work without the support of the two communities. The Government could create fair and workable institutions, but, it could not create the will to make the institution work. However, speaking in a TV programme of the BBC on 1 June 1981, Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said that the Government remained determined to seek a political way forward. In this regard in Summer 1981, he announced his intention to discuss with local politicians a proposal to establish a non-executive Northern Ireland Council with the following functions:[56]

(1) to consider and report to the Secretary of State on the activities of the Northern Ireland departments;

(2) to scrutinise proposals for legislation; and

(3) to make proposals for the future government of Northern Ireland that might be acceptable to both parts of the community there.

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56. Central Office of Information, Northern Ireland (London, 1981), revd. edn., p. 6.

These proposals proved unattractive to the local politicians and attempts to engage them in serious discussions on these proposals failed. In April 1982 the United Kingdom Government embarked on a new initiative to continue its search for a widely acceptable form of devolved government. For this it published a White Paper on Northern Ireland: A Framework for Devolution.[57] In the White Paper the Government proposed that:

(a) An election shall be held for a Northern Ireland Assembly.

(b) The Assembly, from its inception, will have scrutinising deliberative and consultative functions.

(c) The Assembly will also be asked to recommend to the Secretary of State arrangements under which the whole or part of the range of legislative and executive responsibilities previously transferred under the Northern Ireland Constitution Act 1973 could be exercised by the Assembly and a devolved administration answerable to it.

(d) Provided certain criteria are satisfied, the Government will recommend to Parliament that the arrangements recommended by the Assembly should be implemented and appropriate powers transferred.[58]

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57. UK, H.M.S.O., Northern Ireland: A Framework for Devolution, Cmnd. 8541 (1982).

58. Ibid., p. 8.

There would be a 78-member unicameral Assembly elected by the single transferable vote method of proportional representation, with each Parliamentary constituency returning a prescribed number of members to the Assembly. Elections would be held on 20 October 1982 and subsequently it would be held every four years. The principal task of the Assembly would be to reach agreement on how devolved functions would be exercised.[59]

Elections were held in Northern Ireland on 20 October 1982 to establish the proposed 78-member Northern Ireland Assembly. In the elections the Official Unionists got 26 seats, Democratic Unionists 21 seats, Social Democratic and Labour Party 14, Alliance Party 10, Sinn Fein 5, Independent Unionist 1 and Ulster Popular Unionist Party got 1 seat.[60] But, notably, in the newly constituted Northern Ireland Assembly the Catholic dominated Social Democratic and Labour Party and Sinn Fein have returned to take their seats, posing a question mark on the efficiency of the Assembly's function and also on the Westminster plan to restore a measure of home rule for Northern Ireland. Although the new Assembly has started functioning, it appears that the elections have not brought any basic change in the situation prevalent in Northern Ireland.

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59. Ibid.

60. The Times, 25 October 1982.

Since 1972, barring a few months in 1974 when "transferred" functions in Northern Ireland were administered by a power-sharing Executive responsible to a locally-elected Assembly, a system of government known as 'direct rule' has operated in Northern Ireland. Under the 'direct rule', the Parliament at Westminster in which Northern Ireland is currently represented by 12 MPs, makes laws for Northern Ireland while most governmental functions in Northern Ireland are exercised under the direction of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who is a member of the United Kingdom Cabinet. Though, never intended as a permanent solution, the direct rule is renewed annually by the United Kingdom Parliament.

Since the introduction of direct rule in March 1972, the British Government has taken several initiatives in the search for a political solution to the problem in Northern Ireland. Though different in approach and in context, all were directed towards the restoration of devolution to the Province. But none of them was fully acceptable to both the major Communities in Northern Ireland. The major stumbling block was the issue of an executive role for the minority in any future devolved government, so the previous attempts were failed. This was so in 1975 and 1980, James Prior, the present Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, said in Parliament during the debate on the second reading of the Northern Ireland Bill, 1982:

> The Assembly is a necessary preliminary to political stability. The Bill does not deliver a better economy or better security, but without it we cannot proceed to a later stages. Much patience and further negotiations will follow, and it will take time, but without the Assembly we cannot set out along this road. (61)

Nevertheless, the outcome of British Government's initiative of devolved Government in Northern Ireland has still to come up where political parties of Northern Ireland will decide their fate, whether they want devolved form of government or direct rule. If the devolved Administration breaks down, the last resort would be the dissolution of the Assembly and the resumption of direct rule. Another point is that, the 1982 Act does not mention any provision for relations with the Republic or "the Irish Dimension". This would certainly put obstacles in the way of the relations between United Kingdom and the Irish Republic and in solving the Northern Ireland problem through peaceful means.

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61. UK, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Northern Ireland: A New Political Initiative, September 1982, p. 2.

Chapter III

RESPONSE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political Parties in Britain, and Northern Ireland as well, have viewed the Northern Ireland problem from various angles. Their attitudes were conditioned generally by the developments in the local situation in Northern Ireland and also by their possible impact on the present set up of the United Kingdom.

ATTITUDES OF MAJOR NATIONAL PARTIES

The Labour Party

The Labour Party was in power in Britain when the problem of Northern Ireland came to the fore in a serious way. And, therefore, the Labour Party's initial attitude to the problem was more or less identical to the attitude of the Government. However, it may be recalled that before the Civil Rights Association's March on 1 January 1969, especially for 'one man one vote', the Labour Party, expressed the readiness to carry out the five point reformation programme, i.e. (i) a point system for housing allocation; (ii) the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission for Administration ("Ombudsman"); (iii) abolition of the company vote in local elections; (iv) a review of the special powers Act; and (v) the replacement of the old Londonderry Corporation by a Development Commission.[1] But the eruption of violence in

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1. John E. Smyers, "A Setback for Liberal Hopes: Mr. Paisley Runs Capt. O'Neill Close", Round Table (London), no. 234, April 1969, p. 203.

in Northern Ireland delayed the reformation programme. An inquiry commission, under Lord Cameron, was set up to report the 'nature and causes' of the violence of 1 January 1969. To man the major services like electricity, water and other public installations in Northern Ireland British troops were sent.[2] The Labour Party, however, welcomed this move.[3] Indeed, the responsibility for sending troops to Northern Ireland to combat the August 1969 riots was also with the Labour Party.

When the leaders of the political parties in Britain, returned after their Annual Conference, in October 1969, Denis Healey, Labour Party leader stated: "Today, the leaders of these political parties, just returned from their annual conferences preparing for a general election in Britain, are united in total solidarity on the most explosive issue (Ulster problem) facing Britain at the present time".[4]

However, before the General Elections were held in Britain on 18 June 1970, Labour Party published its manifesto which said:

> Northern Ireland presents major problems. Fifty years of one-party Tory rule have led to social tensions and lack of opportunities which erupted into major disorder last summer. The Government

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2. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 782, session 1968-69, cols. 32-40.

3. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 776, session 1968-69, col. 658.

4. Mary Turner, "Social Democrats and Northern Ireland, 1964-1970: The Origins of the Present Struggle", Monthly Review (New York), vol. 30, no. 2, June 1978, p. 45.

> has helped stabilise the situation and has insisted on reforms being carried out in Northern Ireland based on the practice and principle of non-discrimination. In particular, it has been agreed that the reform of local government in Ulster shall proceed and that Central Housing Authority shall be set up. British troops will remain in Northern Ireland as they are needed. (5)

The Labour Party was defeated in the election. But it pressed for a statement from the Government on the Northern Ireland situation. The increased rioting and violence in Northern Ireland forced James Callaghan, Shadow Home Secretary (Labour) to ask Reginald Maudling, the new Home Secretary, for a forceful detection, arrest and charging of those responsible for the violence. He also asked for the 'close control and inspection of licensed rifle clubs'.[6] More than 70 Labour MPs led by Simon Mahon, signed a statement against violence in Northern Ireland. They also called upon the British Government and the Governments of the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland "to appraise their full responsibilities in relation to the present distress in Ireland".[7]

The result was the introduction of 'internment' on 9 August 1971, which caused grave resentment in the British Opposition parties. Labour Party leader, Harold Wilson, speaking on 'internment', said in the House of Commons, on 22 September 1971:

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5. F.W.S. Craig, ed., British General Election Manifestos, 1970-1974 (London, 1975), p. 360.

6. The Guardian (Manchester), 12 February 1971.

7. Ibid.

> The internment decision and the manner in which it was carried through have created a new and grave situation in Northern Ireland. British ministers are responsible to this House, and the course of this debate the House and those whom we represent here have the right to much fuller and franker information on where the Government are going, or think they are going, in the weeks ahead and what, if any, Conservative proposals they have for ensuring in the future, as has not been the case in the past, that this Parliament and the Government responsible to it assert the authority in Northern Ireland affairs which the situation now requires. (8)

Owing to rapid deterioration in the situation in Northern Ireland, Westminster decided to take the security control of Northern Ireland in its own hand[9], and introduced 'Direct Rule' on 24 March 1972 in Northern Ireland. From the point of view of the Labour Party, the 'Direct Rule' was to be introduced in the Province only as a last resort. Harold Wilson, told the House of Commons, on 24 March 1972: "Direct Rule has always been regarded by both Governments, and by both of us in Opposition, as the very last resort, not an objective to be sought for itself, and we have maintained this".[10]

The political initiative to resolve impasse in the last quarter of 1972, was culminated into a Conference at Darlington (25-27 September 1972). Merlyn Rees, Shadow Secretary for Northern Ireland, said in a Conference of the

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8. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 823, session 1970-71, col. 39.

9. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 833, session 1971-72, cols. 1859-1860.

10. Ibid.

Northern Ireland Labour Party on 30 September 1972, at Portadown, that he respected the view that in no circumstances could the North be forced into the South against their will but that firm steps must be taken to end the "discrimination that undoubtedly exists against Catholics".[11]

However, on 3 October 1972, in the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool, Harold Wilson said that "consideration of a united Ireland was necessary in order to find a solution to the problems to the Northern Ireland".[12] The National Executive of the Labour Party, issued a statement on 6 October 1972, which demanded an 'urgent and new action' by the British Government on Northern Ireland. It also expressed the view that the responsibility for 'security' should remain with Westminster.[13]

The border poll in Northern Ireland was held on 8 March 1973, which was followed by the Government's 'White Paper' (20 March 1973) on the Constitutional Proposals. The Labour Party's approach was favourable to those proposals. Harold Wilson, the Labour Party leader, had said on 29 March 1973 in the House of Commons: "I will vote for the White Paper ... and appeal to as many of our hon. friends as possible to vote with us", though, he said, "It does not mean that we regard

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11. Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland, 1968-73: A Chronology of Events, vol. 2, 1972-73 (Belfast, 1974), p. 223.

12. Ibid., p. 225.

13. Ibid., p. 224.

the White Paper as perfect".[14] Another Labour leader, Merlyn Rees said, in April 1973, that, "the success of the White Paper will stem from what we are doing today, and we wish this Bill well".[15]

However, the Labour Programme was brought out in 1973 by the Labour Party on Northern Ireland, said:

> The temporary suspension of Stormont in March 1972 and the imposition of 'Direct Rule' provided a breathing space ... the party has called for a new Assembly elected by proportional representation and involving genuine power-sharing between the communities; the repeal of the Special Powers Act and its replacement by emergency provisions legislation accountable to Parliament .... After the White Paper, the next step is the election to the new Assembly ... for power-sharing and the speed of devolution of the 'transferred' powers. (16)

District Council elections were held on 30 May 1973 under Proportional Representation system, followed by an Assembly election (28 June 1973) and tripartite talks at Sunningdale (6-9 December 1973) among the three (Britain, Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland representatives). Thus the 'Direct Rule' was brought to an end and executive started functioning from 1 January 1974, but only after five months of its functioning, it collapsed due to a strike called by Ulster Worker's Council. Thus, once again 'Direct Rule' was imposed which followed by another White Paper in July

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14. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 853, session 1972-73, col. 1537.

15. The Guardian, 17 April 1973.

16. Labour Party, Labour Programme, 1973 (London, 1973), pp. 83-84.

1974, for a fresh political initiative of power-sharing. The Northern Ireland question was once again on the fore front of British General Election, in 1974. The Labour Party in its Election manifesto had stated:

> There must be some form of power-sharing and parter-ship because no political system will survive, or be supported, unless there is widespread acceptance of it within the community .... Secondly, any pattern of government must be acceptable to the people of the United Kingdom as a whole and to Parliament at West-minster. Thirdly, ... there is an Irish dimension. (17)

With the advent of Labour Party in power in February 1974 a Constitutional Convention was held in 1975, after the collapse of power-sharing Executive. The Convention was reconvened on 3 February 1976. The 1976 Labour Party Programme stated:

> The latest attempt was the Northern Ireland Consti-tutional Convention ... which asked the people and politicians of Northern Ireland themselves to produce an acceptable form of government .... Most of all, the Northern Ireland people have consistently expressed their determination to remain within the United Kingdom. This determination was manifested in the result of the 'Border Poll' of March 1973 .... The Labour Party respects and supports the will of Northern Ireland people to remain within the United Kingdom. (18)

On the direct rule, the Party was of the view that, "it cannot be a long term solution. Labour believes that peace and stability can be restored in Northern Ireland by creating a system of devolved government ... acceptable to both communi-ties".[19]

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17. Craig, n. 5, p. 463.

18. Labour Party, Labour Programme, 1976, p. 97.

19. Ibid.

With the departure of the Labour Party from power as a result of British General Elections of 3 May 1979, a fresh initiative was taken and a four-party Conference was proposed in December 1979, where two political parties of Northern Ireland showed their unwillingness to attend this Conference. Prior to the Conference, Brynmore John, the Labour Party spokesman on Northern Ireland, remarked on 29 November 1979:

> Humphrey Atkins had been somewhat cautious in dealing with the prospects. There was some danger of Parliament being inhibited and the debate being stiffled if they tried to be over-cautious .... To have a Cabinet type structure for executive devolution would mean over-governmental for Ulster. It would be even worse to have legislative devolution based upon a Committee system. (20)

In the reappraisal of Labour Party policy on Northern Ireland Merlyn Rees, former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said in the London Weekend television programme, on 17 May 1981, that there was a possibility to withdraw the guarantee, the "guarantee that the Constitutional relationship will not be changed until a majority in the province approves it"[21], though he expressed some reservation when he said that he did not particularly want the guarantee to be withdrawn.[22]

When there was proposals from the British Government for a 'Northern Ireland Council', and the House of Commons

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20. The Times (London), 30 November 1979.

21. Ibid., 18 May 1981.

22. Ibid.

approved the two proposals - Northern Ireland Act 1974, and Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act 1978, the Chief Labour Party spokesman on Northern Ireland, Dennis Concannon, called for a 'wide range inquiry into the workings of Northern Ireland (Emergency Provision) Act 1978'. He also regarded the review of emergency provisions as a matter of priority.[23] However, James Callaghan, the former Prime Minister, viewed "a broadly independent state of Northern Ireland, which would emerge after a process of policy making" which he said, "would take some years to complete".[24] He also asserted that 'there should not be any difference between government and opposition on the political future of Northern Ireland' and its constitutional status could be changed only with the consent of the majority of its people.

The policy statement of Labour Party, published on 23 July 1981, said:

> We believe the attainment of Irish unity, with the introduction of Socialist policies, ... our aim is to help bring about the unification of Ireland by agreement and consent between the two parts of Ireland .... It would be no part of the political programme of the Labour Party to force Northern Ireland out of the United Kingdom or into the Republic of Ireland. Before any Constitutional change the party would seek to obtain the consent of the people. (25)

The Conservative Party

Before the advent of Conservative Party to power in

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23. Ibid., 3 July 1981.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 24 July 1981.

June 1970, it supported the reformation programme of the Unionist Government in Northern Ireland. This gesture of support of Conservative Party was also explicit when the party leader, Edward Heath, spoke in support of it in the House of Commons on 8 May 1969.[26] On the problem of Northern Ireland, the Conservative party manifesto of 1970 said:

> We reaffirm that no change will be made in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland without the free consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland .... We support the Northern Ireland Government in its programme of legislature and executive action to ensure equal opportunity for all citizens in that part of the United Kingdom. We will provide the military and other aid necessary to support the Royal Ulster Constabulary in keeping the peace and ensuring freedom under the law .... We think it wrong that the balance of power between central and local government should have been distorted, and we will redress the balance and increase the independence of local authorities. (27)

Historically speaking, Conservative Party had close links with the Unionist Party in Northern Ireland and its members at Westminster took the Conservative whip. The introduction of 'internment' in August 1971 was also done with the consultation of Conservative Party. And when the situation in Northern Ireland deteriorated Conservative Government in Westminster wished to take the Northern Ireland security measures in its hand which was followed by the 'Direct Rule'. Since then number of political initiatives were taken by the Conservative Party, while in office, i.e. the Darlington Conference (25-27 September 1972), which was

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26. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 783, session 1968-69, col. 655.

27. Craig, n. 5, p. 340.

followed by the border poll on 8 March 1973, and subsequently the publication of a 'White Paper' on the Constitutional proposals on 20 March 1973. Supporting the Bill on White Paper in April 1973 the Conservative Party leader John Biggs Davison said:

> Here is a new opportunity for the minority and majority in the community to declare with the ballot against the bullet and bombs, and expose the outrageous pretensions of those who terrorise because they cannot peacefully persuade their fellow countrymen. (28)

On 1 January 1974 the Executive in Northern Ireland assumed its charge and started functioning. Thus, the 'direct rule' came to an end. But this experiment initiated by the Conservative Party was a short-term one as the strike organised by the Ulster Workers' Council had resulted in the collapse of the power-sharing Executive. The Conservative Party election manifesto, published shortly afterwards made the party position clear. It said:

> Conservative government, ... will work for peace and consent in Northern Ireland. There can be no military solution without a political solution that is fair to both the majority and the minority communities. Equally there can be no political solution unless terrorism is curbed and the law is respected and upheld by all. There must be partnership between the communities. We will seek the closest co-operation with the Republic, but Ulster is, of course, part of the United Kingdom. (29)

But the Conservative Party lost the election of 1974. Subsequently a 'discussion paper' was published by the British

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28. The Guardian, 17 April 1973.

29. Craig, n. 5, p. 447.

Government in February 1975. However, William Whitelaw, the Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party, made it very clear in May 1975 that, 'any attempt to the old Stormont system would be totally unacceptable to Parliament as a whole and would have to be opposed by the Conservatives'.[30] The Constitution Convention which was held in November 1975, its report was debated in the Commons on 12 January 1976, where Airey Neave gave the approach of the Conservative Party clear. He said:

> The greater the measure of support that can be achieved, the more likely it will be that this House can pass the necessary legislation .... We note that no party in the Convention insisted that power-sharing, be written into a new constitution. (31)

However, the party supported a proposal to establish an office of the 'Queen's Representative' and also a 'Privy Council' for Northern Ireland. But, the proposals remained infructuous. The growing violence in Northern Ireland led the Conservatives to put pressure on the British Government to introduce anti-terrorist measures. As Airey Neave said:

> For Conservative Party, who for the past three years have advocated a tough anti-terrorist strategy in the province, the position must give great satisfaction .... On security at least Roy Mason is a Tory, although on principle he never acknowledged Tory support. (32)

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30. The Guardian, 16 May 1975.

31. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 903, session 1975-76, cols. 69-70.

32. Airey Neave, "New Confidence in Ulster", Spectator (London), vol. 239, 17 December 1977, p. 16.

When the militant loyalists tried to organise a general strike in May 1977 to change the course of events in Northern Ireland as dramatically as in 1974, the leader of the Conservative Party, Margaret Thatcher, assured the Prime Minister, after a Cabinet meeting on 28 April 1977, that the Conservative Party would support the government in every action taken to minimise the dislocation that might be caused. She also supported Prime Minister's appeal to the people of Northern Ireland to 'reject the appeals of the strike organisers'.[33]

Pressure from the Conservatives and Ulster Unionists, inter alia, eventually caused Roy Mason, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to think more seriously about returning devolved powers to Northern Ireland. But Airey Neave expressed grave concern that the Government's continuing refusal to produce a clear and unambiguous plan for the constitutional future of Northern Ireland lessened the chances of success. However, once again Conservative Party came forward with constructive ideas in the hope of helping to break the political deadlock in the province. Thus, Airey Neave summed up Conservative Party's attitude, which was as follows:

> ... a power-sharing administration in Northern Ireland is no longer practical politics. We have always said it could not be imposed .... A new system of local government is needed for the benefit of all relations of the community. It would diminish the power of the Northern Ireland office and its legion of civil servants. It could

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33. The Times, 29 April 1977.

> also foster a better understanding between the various political parties, who would at last have an opportunity of doing constructive work again on behalf of the community. (34)

With the advent of the Conservative Party in power in Britain after the general elections in May 1979, it seemed that Northern Ireland would have a better prospect when a four-party Conference was proposed by Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on 25 October 1979. This Conference was held between 7 January and 24 March 1980, but the political parties in Northern Ireland failed to reach any solution. Subsequently, a fresh Discussion Paper '<u>The Government of Northern Ireland Proposals for Further Discussion</u>' (Cmnd. 7950) was brought out which also proved unproductive. The Conservative Party's effort in mid-1981 to establish a non-executive Northern Ireland Council was also not fruitful. Hence the Conservative Government published another 'White Paper', in April 1982, which proposed to hold an Assembly election in Northern Ireland on 20 October 1982. Though, the Conservative's approach to hold Assembly election in Northern Ireland and form a power-sharing set up there was a right step to break the political deadlock, the two important political parties (SDLP and Sinn Fein) have refrained from taking their seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Though the Assembly has started functioning, it is still not clear what would be the approach of the Conservative

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34. Conservative Research Department, <u>The Campaign Guide Supplement, 1978</u> (London, 1978), p. 158.

Party in future in the context of the boycott of the Assembly by SDLP and Sinn Fein.

The Liberal Party

The Liberal Party, though a smaller one compared to the Labour and the Conservatives, has also contributed substantially to the debate to find out a solution to the problem of Northern Ireland. The Party supported the Government's Reformation Programme in 1969. The Party leader Jeremy Thorpe, while speaking in the House of Commons on 22 April 1969, said:

> The Northern Ireland Government must produce a time table for carrying out the reforms which Captain O'Neill has promised, and which, unhappily, a large minority of Unionist have succeeded in delaying. The time table must be publicly announced and it must be brief. It would be utterly inadequate, in the present circumstances, to delay until the Cameron Commission, inquiring into the causes of unrest in Northern Ireland, has reported. The appointment of the Commission was a wise step, but its value would be undermined if its existence were made the excuse for delaying measures which all reasonable opinion recognises to be necessary. (35)

The growing violence and the unwillingness of Unionist government in Northern Ireland to implement the reformation programme, had disappointed the Liberal Party. In this context, the Party's Election Manifesto of 1970 said:

> Too much power is concentrated in Whitehall and Westminster. Genuine regional government must be established. Liberals propose twelve regional Assemblies in England, exercising many of the powers now exercised at the centre. This will allow the people of a region to have much more

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35. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 782, session 1968-69, cols. 291-92.

> control over their own affairs than they have today. Labour has not put forward any proposals for regional government. They have, however, adopted a modified version of the Maud proposals for local decisions further away from the individual than they are now .... In Northern Ireland Liberals have introduced Civil Rights legislation only to be defeated by the force of reaction. (36)

However, to combat terrorism, the Conservative Government forced Northern Ireland Government to introduce 'internment'. Though the introduction of internment by the Unionist Government in 1971 was supported by the Liberal Party, the way in which it was implemented had aroused resentment among the Liberals. Jeremy Thorpe showed his resentment, while speaking in the Commons on 22 September 1971:

> ... the internment is the most extraordinary situation that the British troops were committed - quite rightly - to Northern Ireland to protect the Catholic community from Protestant Ulster gunmen - because that was the reason which was advanced and which has never been disagreed with - and yet when those who are a threat to the peace are rounded up there is not a single Protestant among the internees .... I therefore find it extraordinary that its implementation, with the only people falling into the category of internees being those who happen to belong to the minority group. (37)

To combat the terrorist activities, Westminster Government wished to take security measures in its own hands and imposed 'Direct Rule', in March 1972. Just after the imposition of 'Direct Rule' the Liberal Party in its annual conference on 24 April 1972, called for the "abolition of the Ulster Defence

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36. Craig, n. 5, p. 368.

37. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 823, session 1970-71, cols. 51-52.

Regiment in Northern Ireland, the withdrawal of troops to barracks and peace-keeping lines, and the introduction of United Nations observers".[38] The British Government's approach, hereafter, to solve the Northern Ireland problem through peaceful way, was seen in the 'White Paper' of March 1973 which was on 'Constitutional Proposals'. It is notable that Liberal Party wholeheartedly supported the Government's new initiatives of 'Constitutional Proposals', when Jeremy Thorpe remarked in the Commons on 28 March 1973:

> I believe that the White Paper should receive the support of the House. I equally believe and fervently hope that it will be given a fair chance of working in Northern Ireland .... It would be impossible for any member of the Liberal Party to oppose the White Paper. (39)

Despite the several efforts of Westminster Government for a political solution in Northern Ireland, they became nothing infructuous due to disagreement between political parties in Northern Ireland. The plan which was proposed in July 1974 by the British Government that local political parties would be given the opportunity to produce a viable Constitution, for this purpose in 1975 Constitution Convention was proposed, also failed in 1976. The failure of Constitutional Convention caused great disappointment to Jo Grimmond, the Liberal leader, when he said that "It is tragic that the present policies are failing. We were right to support them.

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38. Deutsch and Magowan, n. 11, p. 167.

39. UK, Commons, Parliamentary Debates, series 5, vol. 853, session 1972-73, cols. 1350-51.

Perhaps we should continue to do so far a time. But we cannot put up with the present situation for ever".[40]

Nevertheless, the growing terrorism continued in Northern Ireland which led to the assassination of Reverend Robert Bradford, Official Ulster Unionist MP from Belfast, in November 1981, which brought sharp reaction from the Liberal leader Jo Grimmond, who spoke in the House of Commons on 16 November 1981. Thus:

> It is quite clear that the IRA is bent on creating anarchy in Northern Ireland. It is also clear that there are certain MPs who pursue the same aim, and, in the process, obtained as much publicity as they can. The people of Northern Ireland should be aware it is only the security forces who stand between them and virtual Civil War. (41)

ATTITUDES OF MAJOR PARTIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Unionist Party and Other Loyalist Groups

Since the present crisis in Northern Ireland began, the pressures of violence and rapid political change have caused splits and realignments in Northern Ireland political parties. The Unionist Party and the Loyalist groups were one which had undergone such a phase. The Unionists and Loyalists include the Official Unionist Party (OUP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (UPNI), the United Ulster Unionist Movement (UUUM), Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP), etc.

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40. The Guardian, 5 June 1976.

41. The Times, 17 November 1981.

It may be pointed out that the reformation programme[42] which was introduced by the Unionist Party in Northern Ireland was opposed by William Craig, the Home Minister in the Unionist Government. And Craig's opposition to the programme had led to his dismissal on 11 December 1968 from the Government. Similarly, the two ministers in the Unionist Government, Brian Faulkner and William Morgan, who opposed the setting up of the Cameron Commission also resigned in protest[43] as soon as the Commission was appointed to inquire into the 'nature and causes of violence' occurred during the four day protest march (1-4 January 1965), demanding equality of jobs, housing and votes for Northern Ireland minority. Subsequently when the Unionist Parliamentary Party, on 23 April 1969, had accepted Universal Adult Franchise for next local government elections, Chichester Clark, Minister of Agriculture, resigned in protest. Though, he was in favour of this proposal, he thought that "it was too soon for such a move".[44]

Shortly afterwards, in April 1969 itself, Chichester Clark replaced Terence O'Neill as the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. But he retained all of O'Neill's ministers[45], and

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42. For details see footnote 1, Chapter III.

43. Harold Wilson, The Labour Government, 1964-1970: A Personal Record (London, 1971), p. 674 and also Ian Mac Allister Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party: Political Opposition in Divided Society (London, 1977), p.22.

44. Brian Faulkner, ed., Memoirs of a Statesman (London, 1978), p. 54.

45. Cornelius O'Leary, "Northern Ireland: The Politics of Illusion", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 40, July-September 1969, p. 312.

under him the Unionists pushed through the reforms like the introduction of 'one man one vote'; amnesty to all those who were involved in the riots; setting up of an 'Ombudsman', etc. for which he got the unanimous support of the Unionist Standing Committee.[46] When Northern Ireland saw the riots in August 1969, British troops were called in to the province by the Unionists, for the first time, to quell the riots. At first the troops were welcomed by the Catholic communities.[47]

On the whole, the year 1969 saw the growth of fissiparous tendencies in the Unionist Party, which according to John Darby, were an extension of the events of previous years.[48] The Unionist Party under the leadership of Brian Faulkner, who replaced Chichester Clark, made some progress towards fulfilling the demands of the Catholics through the proposals to establish three new parliamentary committees to deal with social services, industrial development and environmental matters. And at least two of the committees would have opposition MPs as salaried Chairman. But the Unionist Party did not want that opposition should share the power in policy making. This was quite obvious from what the leader of Unionist Party said: "In lieu of asking the opposition to run the country, this would (Parliamentary Committees) be the best means of

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46. James Callaghan, A House Divided: The Dilemma of Northern Ireland (London, 1973), p. 15.

47. Russell Stetler, "Northern Ireland: From Civil Rights to Armed Struggle", Monthly Review, vol. 22, November 1970, p. 23.

48. John Darby, Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Development of a Political Community (Dublin, 1976), p. 105.

participation for them".[49]

The growing terrorism and sabotage campaign by 'Provisionals' were at apex, which forced the Unionist Party to introduce the 'internment' on 9 August 1971, banning all public processions for six months.[50] As mentioned earlier, this was followed by the resignation of Brian Faulkner and the imposition of 'Direct Rule' from Westminster. The Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (VUPP), led by William Craig, formed in January 1972, opposed the 'Direct Rule' and demanded that the Northern Ireland Parliament should be restored with full control over dominion status or independence. But the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)[51], led by Rev. Ian Paisley favoured total integration of the Provincial and administration with Westminster. But, this idea got very little support.[52] The Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party also launched a two day strike (27-28 March 1972), against the 'Direct Rule', which was transformed into a mass rally of about 100,000 Protestants, causing severe disruption of life in Northern Ireland.

The Democratic Unionist Party refused to attend the Darlington Conference of September 1972, on the ground that William Whitelaw, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland,

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49. John Magee, Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict (London, 1974), p. 137.

50. Reginald Maudling, Memoirs (London, 1978), p. 184.

51. Originally the Protestant Unionist Party, led by Ian Paisley, has always been on the extreme, Right of Ulster politics, combining religious and political feelings.

52. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (London, 1972), p. 291 and also see Magee, n. 49, p. 150.

failed to institute an inquiry into the killing of two Protestants by the army. But, the Ulster Unionist Party attended the Darlington Conference. Subsequently, the border poll, held on 8 March 1973, gave a clear cut victory to the Unionist Party's proposal for Northern Ireland to remain a part of the United Kingdom.[53]

The border poll was followed by the British Government's White Paper on Constitutional Proposals (20 March 1973). The White Paper's proposal of power-sharing was not taken wholeheartedly by the Unionist Party. Though, they did not reject the proposals outrightly, they refused to share the power with those groups whose aims were a united Ireland.[54] The other two militant parties, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and William Craig's Unionist Progressive Party, rejected the power-sharing proposals and creation of a 'Council of Ireland'. They further asserted that they will make every move to make the new Assembly unworkable.[55]

Accordingly, poll for the new Assembly was held on 28 June 1973. The Unionist group led by Faulkner got 23 seats, and the another Unionist group which rejected the essential feature of the Constitutional Act (John Taylor and Harry West were its leaders) got 9 seats. Those Unionists who rejected

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53. The Times, 10 March 1973.

54. Magee, n. 49, p. 167.

55. B. Vivekanandan, "New Deal for Ulster", Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 10 April 1973.

the White Paper's proposals fought the election under one banner. They were Paisley's DUP and Craig's VUPP. Together, they won 18 seats. Their programme were - the rejection of 'Direct Rule', a 'return of the Stormont Parliament', 'rejection of a Council of Ireland', and opposition to the unification of Ulster with the Republic of Ireland.[56] The candidates of other militant organisations like Ulster Defence Association Ulster Volunteer Force, Loyalist Association of Workers and the Republican Clubs could not win even a single seat.[57]

The Assembly election was followed by Sunningdale Conference (6-9 December 1973), where Brian Faulkner agreed to share the power with the SDLP on the condition that Northern Ireland be regarded as the integrated part of the United Kingdom and that the Republic of Ireland would co-operate in curbing terrorism in the Province. Thus, on 1 January 1974 the 'Direct Rule' was brought to an end and the power-sharing Executive had started functioning. But just after three days the Ulster Unionist Council rejected the proposals of Sunningdale by 457 votes to 374. As a result, Faulkner resigned from the head of the Unionist Party on 7 January 1974 and he was succeeded by Harry West as head of the Party, on 22 January 1974. But, Faulkner remained as the chief executive.[58] Following the

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56. Betty Sinclair, "Northern Ireland: After the Poll", Labour Monthly, August 1973, pp. 371-72 and also see Magee, n. 49, p. 178.

57. Ibid., pp. 372-73.

58. Edgar O'Ballance, Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate (Novato, USA, 1981), p. 194 and also see Mac Allister, n. 43, p. 142.

departure of Faulkner, there emerged a united political front, the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC). Basically, it was the combination of anti-White Paper Unionists, the Vanguard Unionist and the Democratic Unionist. The UUUC issued a statement which called for, among other things, the abolition of the 'Executive' and the end of any idea of a 'Council of Ireland'. However, in May 1974 Ulster Workers' Council gave a call for general strike which led to the collapse of power-sharing executive, and 'Direct Rule' was imposed once again.

A fresh constitutional discussion began and in July 1974 British Government came out with a White Paper on Northern Ireland Constitution. But United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC), opposed any executive form of government which would be a coalition of political parties and recommended the old type Stormont system. However, William Craig's Vanguard Party proposed for a voluntary coalition in the government[59] but failed to satisfy Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Brian Faulkner's Unionist Party of Northern Ireland (formed on 4 September 1974) proposed to remain with United Kingdom. Subsequently, he resigned from the active political life and the leadership of UPNI fell in the hands of Mrs. Anne Dixon.

On 2 May 1977, a strike called by a minority group of loyalist organisations, the United Unionist Action Council,

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59. Ibid., p. 212.

formed by Ian Paisley, included Democratic Unionist Party, the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Workers' Council, who demanded the implementation of the report of the Constitutional Convention and an end to the direct rule, failed to win the support, thus, the strike was called off after eleven days.[60]

On 25 February 1978, Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party was dissolved by William Craig who joined the Official Unionist Party and put pressure on the British Government to increase the Northern Ireland representation in Westminster. The Ulster Defence Association, the most powerful para-military organisation of the Protestants came out with a plan for an independent Northern Ireland with a Presidential system Constitution, which would enable the Roman Catholic minority to take part in the government without institutionalising the concept of power-sharing; that the elected President will nominate his executive with check and balance system as in the United Kingdom.[61]

A four-party Conference called by Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, on 25 October 1979, and which was held between 7 January-24 March 1980, was attended by the Democratic Unionist Party also. The Party suggested that any future government in Northern Ireland should be based

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60. Ibid., pp. 212-13.

61. Financial Times (London), 30 March 1979 and also The Times, 20 October 1978.

entirely on the majority party in an elected Assembly and there would not be any minority representation in the Cabinet. It further suggested that there should be a system of all party departmental committees which would advise on legislation and could call ministers to account.

However, the Official Unionist Party, declined to attend the Conference because it thought that this type of Conference would be unproductive. But it proposed old Stormont system with a Cabinet formed by the leader of the largest groups of the members in the Assembly, or failing that a reorganisation of local government structures. The 1980 Discussion Paper 'The Government of Northern Ireland: Proposals for Further Discussion' (Cmnd. 7950) also proved abortive when it resulted in disagreement over a devolved administration.

The latest initiative of British Government was the April 1982 White Paper - Northern Ireland: A Framework for Devolution. The White Paper proposed an Assembly election on 20 October 1982. In this election Official Unionist Party got 26 seats, Democratic Unionist Party got 21, Independent Unionist 1 and Ulster Popular Unionist 1 seat.[62] Though the Official Unionist has got the maximum seats in the Assembly election but the major deadlock is still not broken by the British Government where the two political parties (SDLP and Sinn Fein) have refused to take their seats in the Assembly.

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62. The Times, 25 October 1982.

The Social Democratic and Labour Party

The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), formed on 21 August 1970 by the six Civil Rights MPs under the leadership of Gerry Fitt and John Hume, was regarded as non-sectarian. But the Party was composed predominently of the Catholics.[63] It supported the Unionist Party proposal, made on 22 June 1975, for the creation of three new Parliamentary Committees to deal with social services, industrial development and environmental matters. But, when the army shot dead two Catholics in Derry in early July 1971, and British Government failed to hold an independent inquiry, the SDLP withdrew its support given to the Unionist Party, stating that they would establish an alternative Assembly. The Party also issued a statement on 16 July 1971, criticizing the Conservative Government and their policies towards Northern Ireland.[64]

When the 'internment' was introduced in Northern Ireland, the 'mass detention' and 'physical brutality' aroused bitter public resentment which led to the Civil Disobedience movement on 15 August 1971. The SDLP was among those who opposed militant and spearheaded the Civil Disobedience movement. This Civil Disobedience movement was partly successful.[65]

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63. Mac Allister, n. 43, p. 3.

64. Extracts from a statement issued by the SDLP, 16 July 1971, cited in Magee, n. 49, p. 138.

65. Michael O'Riordan, "The White Paper on Northern Ireland", Marxism Today (London), vol. 17, no. 6, June 1973, p. 172.

However, when Northern Ireland saw the imposition of 'Direct Rule' from Westminster in March 1972, it was welcomed by SDLP. Surveys also showed that 'Direct Rule' was acceptable to most of the Catholics and Protestant as a last resort.[66]

Nevertheless, by this time the SDLP appeared in a stronger position and started gaining Catholic support. Since its demand to end the interment was not fulfilled, it refused to attend the Darlington Conference. Also, it abstained from the border poll, which was regarded by the SDLP as a futile exercise. Further, it also agitated demanding the publication of a White Paper before the border poll. However, their demands were not met by the British Government. The White Paper was published only on 20 March 1973, which basically constituted the Government's plan for the future administration of Northern Ireland. The SDLP gave a guarded welcome to the White Paper proposals for power-sharing.[67]

At the same time, it proposed a joint control of the Province with two Commissioners - one from Dublin and another from Westminster.[68] But there was no room for such proposals in the White Paper. SDLP further proposed to end the internment and create an acceptable police force to replace the army mere constitutional change would not resolve the crisis,

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66. Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Hands Off", Foreign Policy (New York), no. 37, Winter 1979-80, p. 103.

67. Vivekanandan, n. 56.

68. Irish Times (Dublin), 23 March 1973.

it said.[69]

During the Assembly election of 28 June 1973, to form a power-sharing executive, the SDLP got favourable support from the Catholic community and won 19 seats out of 78. Thus, for the first time it strengthened its position in the Assembly under the leadership of Gerry Fitt.[70] Subsequently, the Party proposed an all-party meeting on 6 October 1973 to discuss the socio-economic problems of Northern Ireland. This had led to the convening of a tripartite conference held at Sunningdale, where the SDLP agreed to share the power with the Unionist Party only when there would be proposals to create a Council of Ireland, and removal of 'internment'.[71]

The 'Direct Rule' came to an end on 1 January 1974, and the Executive took its responsibility but only after its five months of functioning it collapsed due to a general strike in May 1974. The SDLP viewed the strike as a threat to the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland. Therefore, the SDLP ministers who represented the Roman Catholics minority in Northern Ireland had issued an ultimatum to Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, that 'either the British Government must use the troops to break the strike or the ministers would resign from the executive, allowing

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69. Ibid., and also The Guardian, 21 July 1973.

70. Merlyn Rees, "Northern Ireland 1974", Contemporary Review, vol. 224, no. 1295, February 1974, p. 58.

71. Mc Allister, n. 43, p. 142.

Brian Faulkner's Administration to be destroyed.[72]

The British Government brought out a 'White Paper' on Northern Ireland Constitution, in July 1974, which proposed an election on Constitutional Convention. In this election, the SDLP got 31 seats out of 78. Though the SDLP was in favour of a power-sharing government, in which majority and minority both could participate in the policy-making and administration, the Constitutional Convention failed to break the ice. Thus, the Executive was dissolved on 5 March 1976. However, on the Loyalist proposals, Gerry Fitt, leader of the SDLP, said that, "the SDLP have made it equally plain that no other form of power-sharing would be acceptable, certainly not the committees which have been proposed by the Loyalists".[73] He further warned the Loyalists saying that, "if the minority is excluded from a voice in government, then no army in the world however well equipped will be able to keep the voice of the minority still".[74]

A series of meetings took place between the SDLP and the Official Unionist over the issue of power-sharing after the dissolution of the Assembly, where SDLP wanted a guaranteed role for those who were representing the Catholic minority. But no concrete results came out of these meetings and Northern Ireland had witnessed another unsuccessful strike on 2 May 1977.

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72. The Observer (London), 27 May 1974.

73. The Times, 3 May 1975.

74. The Guardian, 29 May 1975.

The SDLP, in its annual meeting in November 1978, called for a British-Irish Conference to find a permanent solution to the Irish problem. The leaders of SDLP, however, made it very clear that the 'solution they had in mind was reunification of the Protestant north with the Catholic south and eventual British withdrawal from the province.[75] They also asserted that 'Irish unity would work only if the Northern Ireland Protestants who would become the islands minority, were somehow guaranteed protection by the British Government".[76] The SDLP also made it very clear that 'unless the British Government allow the issue of 'Irish unity to be included in the Stormont talks, it would not participate'.[77] In the four party Conference, which was proposed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, on 25 October 1979.

When the Conference was held between 7 January to 24 March 1980, SDLP was permitted by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, to place its paper on the 'Irish Dimension' and put his own proposals regarding the form of government for Northern Ireland. The SDLP proposed a power-sharing Executive in which minority representation would be there in proportion to their strength in the Assembly.[78]

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75. International Herald Tribune (Paris), 20 November 1978.

76. Ibid.

77. The Times, 26 March 1980.

78. Financial Times, 26 March 1980.

The recent proposals of British Government, envisaged in 'White Paper' of April 1982, had emphasised on the Assembly election in Northern Ireland. The Assembly elections were held on 20 October 1982, where SDLP got 14 seats, but has refused to take seats in the Assembly. John Hume, the leader of SDLP, has gone as far as saying that "the results of the election show that James Prior's (the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland) Assembly is as dead as a Dodo". It is still to be seen that what would be the next proposals of the SDLP which could satisfy the political parties in Northern Ireland as well as the British Government.

Sinn Fein and the IRA

Sinn Fein, formed by Arthur Griffth in 1905, was basically a moderate movement. It did not demand for a total independence. Thus, originally, it was not Republican movement. But, after the signing of Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6 December 1921, Sinn Fein was split into two groups. The majority, led by William T. Cosgrave, wanted to accept the treaty. Later on this group became Fine Gael. The group which rejected the treaty, led by Eamon de Valera and refused to recognise the new state, was called Sinn Fein. From 1926 onwards Sinn Fein operated as a political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) whose aim was to overthrow the treaty and bring about the reunification of Ireland by use of force. The IRA was banned in South of Ireland after the bombing campaign of 1930s in Britain and Ireland. But Sinn Fein was

allowed to continue as a political organisation. However, Sinn Fein supported the IRA's aim. Gradually Sinn Fein developed some left wing philosophy, while the IRA carried out its periodic military campaign in Britain and Northern Ireland.

With the split in the IRA in late 1969, Sinn Fein also was split into two groups - the 'Provisional Sinn Fein' and the 'Official Sinn Fein'. Provisional Sinn Fein supported the campaign of Provisional IRA in Northern Ireland and Official Sinn Fein opposed IRA's violence and went more and more in favour of political activities. In 1977, the Official Sinn Fein Party made an addition to its title and called itself "The Sinn Fein - The Workers Party". Tomas MacGiolla became its President. At present it has two seats in the Dail. The Sinn Fein - The Workers Party has a left wing socialist, socio-economic programme but it favours reconciliation towards Ireland. The Provisional Sinn Fein's activities are confined mainly in Northern Ireland and are primerily in support of the objectives of the Provisional IRA.

The Irish Republican Army, which was the military wing of Sinn Fein, became active in 1969 after a long interval. But the inner rivalries in the IRA in late December 1969 led to a split in the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Of the two wings which emerged out of the split, the "Officials", dominated by Cathal Goulding (President of Sinn Fein), were more left oriented and adopted the Socialist line envisaging a United Socialist Republican Ireland. For them struggle for national

independence and social revolution were inseparable. With their Marxist ideology, they dominated Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association after 1971.[79] The other wing 'Provisionals', believed in action rather than ideology and its leadership had gone into the hands of Mac Stiafain, who believed that Ireland could be united only by means of violence, bombs and bullets.[80] It also believed in a federal constitution of Ireland. The first declared task of the 'Provisionals' was to protect the Catholic Community from the Protestant para-military forces.

Nonetheless, the year 1970 saw the intermittent rioting and violence in Northern Ireland by both 'Provisionals' and 'Officials' who sometimes fought with each other also. However, the Provisionals were more successful in attracting the Catholic Community and obtained their support. Thus, it became popular in comparison with Officials. Nonetheless, both the groups committeed terrorism and it was estimated that in 1971 twenty per cent of the terrorist activities was committed by Officials and rest by the Provisionals.[81]

'Internment' was introduced in Northern Ireland largely due to the violent activities of the IRA. It was provoked partly by the violent incident of 10 March 1971, in which

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79. Tom Bowden, "The IRA and the Changing Tactics of Terrorism", Political Quarterly, vol. 47, October-December 1976, p. 433.

80. Ibid., p. 435.

81. O'Ballance, n. 58, pp. 132-40.

three Scottish soldiers were brutally killed by the IRA, its massive bombing and sabotage campaign which destroyed the Daily Mirror (pro-British Labour Paper and traditionally anti-Irish), on 17 July 1971, and the killing of a British soldier on 8 August 1971. The internment was introduced on 9 August 1971, in which 53 Provisionals were interned on the very first day. Similarly, apprehensions about IRA forced British Government to take the 'security' measures in Westminster's hands. However, before the introduction of 'Direct Rule', the IRA made a three point proposal which both "Officials" and "Provisionals" had supported. These demands were: (i) an immediate withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland; (ii) the abolition of Stormont Parliament; (iii) an amnesty for all political prisoners (tried, untried and those who are on wanted list).[82] The British Government did not pay any heed to the Provisional's demand because of the fact that it was unrealistic. Hence Provisionals issued a statement declaring that, "guerilla war in north will continue until the British Government agrees to end the internment without trial, withdraw its troops and grant political amnesty to all political prisoners".[83] The SDLP tried to mediate between the IRA and the British Government over these proposals and, as a result, a secret meeting was held, on 7 July 1972, between the IRA consisted of Mac

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82. Faulkner, n. 44, p. 150.

83. The Guardian, 12, 13, 14 March 1972.

Stiofean, O'Connell, Gerry Adoims, Seamus Twomey, Ivor Bell, and Martin Mc Guinessand William Whitelaw. This meeting broke down on 9 July 1972, which led to the escalation of terrorist activities and bombings by Provisionals. On 21 July 1972, there were 22 explosions in Belfast which took the life of eleven persons and injured hundred and twenty persons. This incident was known as 'Bloody Friday'.[84]

However, in the border poll of 8 March 1973 Sinn Fein along with SDLP abstained from voting. And during the strike of May 1974 they adopted 'a wait and watch' approach though, paradoxically, they said that 'they would not welcome an immediate withdrawal of British troops from the country'.[85] It also took a serious view of Ian Paisley's threat that "if the bombings and shootings do not stop, then the 'Loyalists' will flush them out and destroy them".[86]

The Provisionals continued its terrorist activities, and when British Government called a Constitutional Convention in February 1976, the death of an IRA hunger striker, Frank Stagg, led to considerable violence. This had undermined the Catholic support to SDLP. A riot flared up following the march by IRA supporters protesting against the abolition of special prisoner status, for political detenus. Thus, terrorism continued throughout 1976.

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84. Mc Allister, n. 43, p. 118 and also see Magee, n. 49, pp. 152, 156, O'Ballance, n. 58, p. 197.

85. The Observer, 27 May 1974.

86. Ibid.

To achieve its goal, the Provisionals started hunger strike in the Maze prison in 1981. They also put forth five demands before British Government. Those demands were:

(i) free association with other political prisoners;

(ii) the right to wear their own clothes;

(iii) the right to organise their own recreation, education and work;

(iv) the right to receive one visit, one letter and one parcel per week;

(v) the right to full remission of sentences.[88]

Some of the demands were fulfilled by the British Government though after a loss of ten lives on these issues. However, for the IRA this violence remained part of its campaign to activise its goal of a united Ireland. In the recent Northern Ireland Assembly Election of 20 October 1982, the political wing of IRA, Sinn Fein contested the election and got 5 seats.[89] Though it is a considerable achievement for Sinn Fein, it like the SDLP has refused to take their seats in the Assembly.

The Alliance Party and Others

The New Ulster Movement (which had emerged in February 1969 to support Terence O'Neill) paved the way for a new political party, the Alliance Party, formed on 20 April 1970 and led by Oliver Napier, Robert Cooper, John Hunter and Brian Walker. The Alliance Party tried to form a bridge between

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88. The Times, 10 July 1981.

89. Ibid., 25 October 1982.

the Catholics and the Protestants, and thus attracted members from both the communities. And hence, it claimed to be a non-secretarian organisation. However, the party welcomed the Direct Rule when it was imposed and attended the Darlington Conference (25-27 September 1972) along with other two political parties - Ulster Unionist Party and Northern Ireland Labour Party. It also supported the White Paper on power-sharing published in March 1973. It was also supported by Northern Ireland Labour Party. At the Darlington Conference, it tried to promote the Party's compromise plan on the 'police' involving the retention of Royal Ulster Constabulary side by side of a new force to patrol the streets.[90]

However, in June 1973 Assembly Election, the Alliance Party got 8 seats, whereas NILP got only one seat. Thus, Alliance Party became a partner in the power-sharing. Its representative, Oliver J. Napier was the Law Minister and Head of the Office of Law Reform in the Executive. In the Administration, Rober G. Cooper, was there as a Minister of Manpower Services (he was not in the Executive). In the Constitutional Convention, the Party favoured a power-sharing government in which both the majority and the minority could share the power in the administration. Besides the leader of the Party, Oliver Napier, made a proposal to increase seats in the Westminster for Northern Ireland from 12 to 19.

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90. The Guardian, 24 July 1973.

The Alliance Party attended the four-party Conference, held in 1980. At the Conference it came with a proposal for a partnership form of Government, through a system of departmental committees in which each ministry would be run by an all-party committees, with a panel of committee Chairman allocating departmental budgets without Cabinet.[91]

From 1980 to 1981 major political parties failed to reach on any agreement on some form of power-sharing Executive. thus, a fresh 'White Paper' was brought out by United Kingdom in April 1982, which envisaged Assembly Election in Northern Ireland. The Alliance Party contested the election on 20 October 1982 and won 10 seats, agreeing to share the power in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Thus, it is obvious that the Northern Ireland problem took a serious turn after 1969. Both the major parties in Britain - the Labour Party, which was in power that time and the Conservative Party, the main Opposition Party then - had failed to implement the reformation programme in Northern Ireland. However, on fundamental questions there was consensus between the Labour and Conservatives. This could be seen in the support the Conservative Party gave to the Labour Party to deal with the problem throughout 1969. The Conservative leader, Quintin Hogg, and the Labour leader, Denis Healey, also exchanged congratulations, saying that 'our objectives

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91. Derek Birrell, "A Government of Northern Ireland and the Obstacle of Power-Sharing", Political Quarterly, vol. 52, no. 2, April-June 1981, p. 190.

... are identical'.[92] At the same time, the Unionist Party's unwillingness to implement the reformation programme in Northern Ireland generated disappointment among the Liberals in Britain and also among the Catholic Community in Northern Ireland as well. It was in this context that Jeremy Thorpe, leader of the Liberal Party, had asked the Northern Ireland Government that they must produce a time table for carrying out the reforms. However, the failure of reformation programme had resulted in massive violence in Northern Ireland by the Irish Republican Army, the military wing of the Sinn Fein.

Both the Labour and the Conservatives were of the view that peace should be restored in Northern Ireland. And, for this reason, 'internment' was introduced by the Unionist Government in Northern Ireland. The introduction of 'internment', though may be regarded as a right measure, aroused strong resentment among the Catholics. Indeed, they regarded it as a threat to the minority community in Northern Ireland. Therefore, Social Democratic and Labour Party of Northern Ireland also opposed internment from the very beginning. And a Civil Disobedience movement was also organised against it. The Liberals began to criticise internment when it was found that the internees belonged mainly to the minority community in Northern Ireland.

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92. Turner, n. 4, p. 45.

The 'internment' could not check the terrorist activities in Northern Ireland. The Conservative Party, which was in power then, took a serious note of the deteriorating law and order situation in Northern Ireland and brought the Province under 'Direct Rule' from Westminster. Though, for both the major parties - the Labour and the Conservative - 'Direct Rule' was regarded as a last resort, it was openly opposed by the Unionist Party and the Loyalist groups in Northern Ireland. On the contrary, the introduction of Direct Rule was welcomed by the SDLP and the Alliance Party.

So far as the major parties in Britain were concerned, they never regarded 'Direct Rule' as a long term solution to the Northern Ireland problem. Therefore, they favoured a power-sharing Executive which assumed functioning from 1 January 1974. But, unfortunately, the power-sharing Executive did not last long. There emerged a united political front, the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC), which demanded the abolition of the 'Executive' and the giving up of the idea of a 'Council of Ireland'. This was followed by a strike call given by Ulster Workers' Council, in May 1974, which led to the collapse of a power-sharing Executive.

After the fall of the power-sharing Executive the Labour Party tried to resolve the crisis through negotiations and for this reason a Constitutional Convention was held in 1975 but political leaders in Northern Ireland failed to reach on any agreement for a power-sharing government. It

may be mentioned that the main reason for the Constitutional Convention was United Ulster Unionist Council's opposition to any form of Executive government which would be a coalition of political parties. Nevertheless, it suggested the restoration of the old type Stormont system. This was obviously against the wishes of the Catholic community. Hence the SDLP opposed that proposal. Moreover, the Conservative Party also made it clear that any old type Stormont government would be totally unacceptable.

The Conservative Party came in power in May 1979. Fresh initiatives were taken once again. Immediately after it assumed power a Conference was proposed among the four major parties in Northern Ireland. In addition to this, the Conservatives had taken a number of measures to break the political deadlock in Northern Ireland. But all of them failed. Indeed, the main reason for the failure was disagreement over the devolved administration. Hence, the Conservative Party brought out a new White Paper in April 1982 which proposed an Assembly election in Northern Ireland on 20 October 1982. The political parties in Northern Ireland contested the election but two of them - the SDLP and the Sinn Fein refused to take their seats in the Assembly. Though, both the parties have got a good number of seats, the Assembly is still dominated by the Unionist Party. Therefore, the Northern Ireland Assembly's decisions are likely to overwhelmingly reflect the Unionist views.

Chapter IV

IRELAND'S ATTITUDE

When the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 came into effect on 22 December the same year, the six Counties of Northern Ireland were sundered from the twenty-six Counties of the South. A year later, on 6 December 1921, a five member Irish delegation, led by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, signed the Anglo-Irish treaty and created Southern Ireland. The Southern Ireland was given the dominion status. Though nobody wanted partition, those who signed the treaty thought that this would be the best way to find a temporary solution to unite Irelands.[1]

Eamon de Valera, who had replaced Arthur Griffith as a Sinn Fein President on 26 October 1917, and his supporters opposed the treaty but failed to prevent the passage of the treaty in the Dail and this led to the 'Civil War' in 1912 between the opponents and protegonists of the treaty.[2] This 'Civil War' lasted till May 1923 and it resulted in the formation of two main political parties in the Southern Ireland - Cumann naGaedhael, led by William T. Cosgrave

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1. Garret FitzGerald, Towards a New Ireland (London, 1972), p. 13 and also see A Review of the Situation in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland and a Statement of the Irish Government's Policy as given by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland) in a speech at Tralee, Co. Kerry, on September 20, 1969 (Government Information Services, Dublin, 1969), p. 1.

2. Max Hastings, Ulster 1969: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland (London, 1970), p. 21.

(pro-treaty) (now this Party is known as Fine Gael, led by FitzGerald) and Fianna Fail, led by Eamon de Valera (anti-treaty).[3] Now it is led by Charles J. Haughey.

The idea of a 'Council of Ireland' which was mooted to smoothen the relations and to keep the link between the South and the North was also quickly abandoned. In 1937 a new Constitution was enacted by plebiscite and, finally, in 1949 the Southern Ireland withdrew from Commonwealth and became a Republic. The 'Irish Question', however, remained the central issue in the politics of the Republic of Ireland. The worsening situation of Northern Ireland following the launching of 'Civil Rights Movement' in early 1969 gave the opportunity to the Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, to 'internationalize' the Northern Ireland problem.[4] The Republican Government announced, on 21 April 1969, that in view of 'growing discontent and extreme gravity of the situation' the Prime Minister, John Lynch would like to meet the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson. The announcement said that the Irish Deputy Prime Minister, Frank Aiken, would apprise the U.N. Secretary General U. Thant of the situation in Northern Ireland.[5]

On 23 April 1969, the Irish Foreign Minister, Patrik Hillery met U. Thant and asked him to intervene in the 'Irish

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3. John Magee, Northern Ireland: Crisis and Conflict (London, 1974), p. 16.

4. Edgar O'Ballance, Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate (Novato, USA, 1981), p. 115.

5. The Guardian (Manchester), 22 April 1969.

Problem' so that the 'Civil Rights' could be restored in Northern Ireland. It may be recalled that in 1965 the Irish Prime Minister, Sean Lemass, for the first time exchanged visits in January 1965 with Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Terence O'Neill, with a view to normalising the relations at the highest level.[6] But the renewed violence at the highest of July and August 1969 in Northern Ireland arrested any progress in this direction.

However, in August 1969, John Lynch, the Irish Prime Minister, in a broadcast, made a proposal for the stationing of a U.N. peace keeping force in Northern Ireland and also called for a 'review of the constitutional position of the province'. But the whole issue was sidetracked by the British Government when it proclaimed that the Northern Ireland was a part of the United Kingdom and that the problem there was an "internal matter",[7] of the United Kingdom. However, the policy of the Irish Republic towards the Northern Ireland question was enunciated by John Lynch, Prime Minister, on 28 August 1969:

> I need not explain or justify the fundamental desire of the overwhelming majority of the people of this island for the restoration in some form of its national unity .... However, ... we have no intention of using force to realise this desire .... Of its nature this policy — of seeking unity through agreement in Ireland between Irishmen — is a long-term one .... Let me make it clear, too, that in

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6. Liam de Paor, Divided Ulster (Middlesex, 1970), pp. 146-47.

7. The Tribune (Ambala), 23 August 1969.

> seeking re-unification, our aim is not to extend the domination of Dublin .... I envisaged the possibility of intermediate stage in an approach to a final agreed solution ...(8)

The end of 1969 saw a major change when the IRA was split into two groups - "Officials" with more left oriented ideology and "Provisionals" which believed in violence and action rather than ideology.[9] The former adopted a socialist approach and the latter also refused to agree with the strategy and means of the Republic's government to unite Ireland. This development had a notable impact on Lynch's policy. There was a reaction within his own Party because of the emergence of a more militant group. Among them who had supported the militant group were Charles J. Haughey, the Finance Minister, Neil T. Blaney, Agriculture Minister, and Kevin Boland, Minister for Local Government and Social Welfare. However, in April 1970, Haughey and Blaney were charged with attempting to ship arms across the border to the IRA in Northern Ireland. Following this, both of them were dismissed, on 6 May 1970, from the Government. In support of these two Ministers, two other Ministers resigned. Among them was Kevin Boland who formed his own party 'Aontacht Eireann'.[10] But the government

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8. John Lynch, A Review of the Situation in the Six Counties of North-East Ireland and a Statement of the Irish Government's Policy as given by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister of Ireland) in a speech at Tralee, Co. Kerry, on September 20, 1969 (Government Information Services, Dublin, 1969), pp. 2-3. In certain publications, John Lynch has been referred as Jack Lynch.

9. Tom Bowden, "The IRA and the Changing Tactics of Terrorism", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 47, October-December 1976, pp. 433, 435.

10. Patrick Keatinge, A Place Among the Nations: Issues of Irish Foreign Policy (Dublin, 1978), p. 116.

failed to prove the charges against the accused and on 23 October 1970 all charges against the accused were dismissed. While doing so the judge remarked that 'someone has been lying'.[11] In early May 1970, a Dublin magazine, This Week, revealed, after conducting an opinion poll, that only 17% favoured the sending of the Irish Army over 'the Border' if the pogrom of August 1969 was repeated.[12]

By the end of 1970 the Lynch Government changed its policy towards Northern Ireland which was based on 'functional co-operation' followed by Sean Lemass. Lynch proposed on 20 February 1971, an extension of 'preferential tariffs for Northern Ireland goods', and co-operation in 'cross-border regional development'. He also called for the creation of a 'joint economic council'. The idea behind such proposals were that 'economic and social co-operation' would lead to reduction of political tension.[13]

In Northern Ireland, there was a constant effort to supress violence. Because of the continuing upheaval however, Northern Ireland Government decided to introduce internment. Hence on 9 August 1971, internment without trial was introduced. The introduction of 'internment' had resulted in the shelving the policy of 'functional co-operation'.[14] The Republican

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11. O'Ballance, n. 4, p. 134 and also see Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (London, 1972), p. 247.

12. Magee, n. 3, p. 22.

13. Keatinge, n. 10, p. 118.

14. Ibid.

Government reacted sharply to the introduction of internment in Northern Ireland but maintained that: "We have no intention of using our defence forces to intervene in the affairs of Northern Ireland", and that the "Irish Government cannot and will not support any armed activity which will inevitably cause further suffering and deaths".[15]

It was apparent that the internment would be a 'hard pill for Irish Government to swallow'. A strong criticism of the British and Northern Ireland Government's policy was made in Dail on 20-21 October 1971. Though, Lynch did not delay the opening of the refugee camps and giving assistance to the refugees from Northern Ireland, it marked a serious departure from the conciliatory policy followed between Belfast and Dublin. He personally met the Catholic MPs in Stormont and sent his Minister for External Affairs, Patrick Hillary, to London in protest against 'internment'.[16]

Speaking in the Dail on 20 October 1971, he said that the introduction of internment had obviously been a "tragic mistake" and would have to be ended quickly if progress were to be achieved, and that the ultimate solution lay in the creation of a 'United Ireland'. Liam Cosgrave, the Opposition Leader also said, the same day, that "the only permanent solution to the situation in the north was a united Ireland,

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15. John Lynch, Speeches and Statements on Irish Unity, Northern Ireland, Anglo-Irish Relations (Government Information Bureau, Dublin, 1971), pp. 13, 75.

16. O'Ballance, n. 4, pp. 150-51.

which could not be achieved through violence, repression or through the use of force", as this kind of unity would not be long lasting and that it would be opposed by Irish people. The leader of the Labour Party, Brendan Corish also held the same view. As a result, the Irish Government's policy was to support the passive resistance policy of the largest Catholic dominated party of Northern Ireland, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, and to bring the case of ill-treatment of Northern Ireland internees before the European Court of Human Rights.

The events of 'Bloody Sunday' on 30 January 1972, aroused intense anger and indignation in Irish Republic and on 31 January 1972 an emergency session of Dail met where Irish premier said that the Government was fully satisfied that there was an unprovoked attack by the British troops which resulted in the death of 13 unarmed civilians in Derry. The anti-British sentiments had grown in Dublin to the extent that Ireland recalled its ambassador in London. Further, the Government of Ireland, made a three point proposal. The proposals were:

(a) the British troops should be withdrawn immediately from Derry;

(b) internment should end; and

(c) a declaration to the effect of Britain's intention to achieve a final settlement of the Irish problem.

However, soon the Irish Government had abandoned the policy which was based on mutual trust and economic co-operation, hitherto pursued, and, the 'quiet diplomacy' of Lynch was replaced by 'diplomacy of protest'[17], which brought the Dublin Government and Westminster Government face-to-face.

It is also remarkable that the Irish Foreign Minister's approach to the United Nations and internationalisation of the 'Irish Question' by taking up the problem to the American President and the West European Governments had embarrassed Britain. Though the American President Richard M. Nixon did not allow the Irish problem to influence Anglo-American relations, the campaign of the Irish Government could not go unnoticed. Indeed, it forced Westminster to suspend the Stormont regime on 24 March 1972 and replace it by a power-sharing government, which included both the majority and the minority communities. Thus, the concept of power-sharing which was proposed for the first time after 50 years of one party rule, was included in a 'modified form in the Constitution Act of 1973'.[18]

The introduction of 'Direct Rule' from Westminster marked the beginning of a new era in the Anglo-Irish relations. Lynch, in an article, declared that the introduction of direct rule in Northern Ireland had reopened the Irish question as

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17. Keatinge, n. 10, p. 118.

18. Magee, n. 3, pp. 22-23.

a whole, and that the only solution was an 'Ireland united by agreement in independence; an Ireland in a friendly relationship with Britain; an Ireland which will be a member with Britain of the enlarged European Communities".[19] His demand was for a positive British commitment to eventual Irish unity but he indicated that in the meanwhile he was willing to take up the question of the reform of the Republic's Constitution in the context of a new Ireland.[20]

Early 1973 witnessed the continuation of the same terrorist activities in Northern Ireland as it was the case in 1972. Measures were taken in the Irish Republic to check the growing violence. However, in an opinion poll conducted for Dublin's Sunday Independent (Sunday edition of the pro-Fine Gael newspaper Irish Independent) newspeper of 4th March 1973, it was reported that only 29% of the combined populations of Ireland and Northern Ireland considered Irish unification as the best solution to the Northern Ireland crisis, and in Irish Republic alone 37% of those polled thought that unity was the best solution to end the fighting in the North.

The replacement of Fianna Fail Party by Fine Gael and Labour Party (Coalition Government) in the general election of 14 March 1973, however, changed the policy of Ireland towards Northern Ireland. The Coalition Party in their

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19. These ideas were expressed in a very general form. See John M. Lynch, "The Anglo-Irish Problem", Foreign Affairs (New York), pp. 601-17.

20. Ibid.

electoral campaign had proposed that if they come to power, Liam Cosgrave (Fine Gael) and Brendan Corish (Labour), would be the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister respectively. A fourteen point policy statement was also issued to find a peaceful solution to the Northern Ireland problem and to end the blood-shed, injustice and sectarian tendencies. A significant change of Fine Gael was that, it emphasised 'reconciliation rather than unity'.[21]

The British Government brought out a 'White Paper' on 'Constitutional Proposals' on 20 March 1973, which contained the programme for the future admin'stration of Northern Ireland.[22] This included a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland, the total integration of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, and the role of the 'Council of Ireland'. Thus, for the first time, 'Irish Dimension' emerged with the concept of the Council of Ireland in 'Sunningdale Agreement' of December 1973.[23]

The Assembly elections were held on 28 June 1973 in Northern Ireland for a power-sharing government. This was followed by a tripartite talk between the Irish and British Governments and the parties involved in the Northern Ireland

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21. Irish Times (Dublin), 17 March 1973. As early as September 1969 Fine Gael accepted that the reunification should depend on a majority vote in Northern Ireland.

22. UK, H.M.S.O., Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals Cmnd. 5259 (1973).

23. W.D. Flackes, Northern Ireland: A Political Directory, 1968-79 (Dublin, 1980), p. 71.

Executive (designate), led by Liam Cosgrave, Edward Heath and Brian Faulkner respectively, at Sunningdale from 6-9 December 1973.[24] The 'Council of Ireland' which was to include thirty members each from the Dail and the Northern Ireland Assembly to form a Council of Ministers and a Consultative Assembly to improve relations between the north and south, especially on economic aspects, which was one of the major issues and was widely discussed at the 'Sunningdale Conference'.[25] It was also finally resolved by the Irish Government that, "there could be no change in the status of Northern Ireland until a majority of the people of Northern Ireland desired a change in that status".[26] However, the Irish Government failed to discuss any amendment of Article 2 and 3 of the Constitution. The Heath Government, hailed the agreement as a very considerable achievement. In the same vein, Cosgrave also expressed the view that the agreement would go a long way to meet the contingencies of the situation.

On 16 January 1974, the Chief Executive of Northern Ireland, Brian Faulkner, met the Irish Prime Minister Liam

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24. Ian Mac Allister, The Northern Ireland Social Democratic and Labour Party: Political Opposition in a Divided Society (London, 1977), pp. 128-31 and also see Magee, n. 3, p. 186; O'Ballance, n. 4, p. 192.

25. Northern Ireland: Agreed Communique issued following the Conference between the Irish and British Governments and the parties involved in the Northern Ireland Executive (designate) on 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th December 1973 (Government Information Services, Dublin, 1973), pp. 4-5.

26. Ibid., p. 2 and also see Brian Faulkner, ed., Memoirs of a Statesman (London, 1978), pp. 230-31, and Magee, n. 3, pp. 186-87.

Cosgrave. Cosgrave took the occasion to convince Faulkner that Dublin had accepted Ulster's constitutional status and went on to hold that it would not seek the 'unification of Ireland' without the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland. He assured Dail on 13 March 1974 that his government considered Northern Ireland to be a part of the United Kingdom and that his government accepted this "as a fact".[27] However, it is significant to note that the 'Sunningdale Agreement' was never ratified and the clause 5 of the Agreement - the declaration of status - caused the Opposition Party, Fianna Fail, to challenge its constitutionality in the Supreme Court of Ireland. The verdict of the Court vindicated the stand of the government maintaining inter alia that its decision did not frustrate the Republic's goal of an United Ireland. Thus, Fianna Fail accepted Cosgrave's statement with some reservation. Ruairi O'Bradaigh, head of the Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) said that in "each statement Cosgrave makes, he goes nearer to subverting the constitution".[28] In the meanwhile, Prime Minister Edward Heath was replaced by Harold Wilson after the February 1974 British general election.

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27. Liam Cosgrave, Northern Ireland: Statement on the Status of Northern Ireland, made in Dail Eireann, 13 March 1974, by Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, T.D. (Government Information Services, Dublin, 1974).

28. Faulkner, after a meeting with Cosgrave in Northern Ireland on 1 February 1974 had said the requirements for establishment of the Council of Ireland were; recognition that Dublin accepted Ulster's status as part of the United Kingdom, improvement of security across their border, and a report from a working party set up at their meeting that day to examine matters that would be administered by a Council of Ireland.

Harold Wilson on his first official visit to Northern Ireland as the Prime Minister of Britain lend support to the Sunningdale Agreement. During his visit he also called for the creation of the "Council of Ireland". In this regard he had also requested Liam Cosgrave to move quickly towards the formal signing of the 'Sunningdale Agreement'.

In May 1974, while speaking in the Dail after the collapse of power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland, Liam Cosgrave, Irish Prime Minister, said that misrepresentation of its purpose and the violence as well had destroyed the power-sharing Ulster Executive. He said that "the campaign of violence by the provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army had provoked a massive sectarian backlash". When the British Government published a 'White Paper' on 'The Northern Ireland Constitution' in July 1974, the hopes were once again kindled as to the creation of another power-shering government in Northern Ireland. The White Paper emphasised the establishment of a power-shering executive, acceptable to a large number of people within the community.[29] It was also agreed, in a joint communique issued after the talks between the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson and the Irish Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave on 11 September 1974, that any new administration in Northern Ireland would have to be based on power-sharing between the Protestant and Catholic communities.

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29. Derek Birrell, "A Government of Northern Ireland and Obstacle of Power-Sharing", Political Quarterly (London), vol. 52, no. 2, April-June 1981, p. 185 and also see Mc Allister, n. 24, p. 148.

The failure of Constitutional Convention in 1975, had resulted in the stepping up of violence on the part of the IRA. Thus, both the British and the Irish Governments had proceeded with anti-terrorism legislation which was agreed at Sunningdale. However, the Coalition Government's main concern was to diffuse the tension mainly through persuading Northern Ireland Protestants that they had nothing to fear from the South.

Nevertheless, the quest for a political solution to the problems of Northern Ireland remained alive. Though the Republican Coalition Government's aim was to encourage power-sharing which could lead to a 'suitable recognition of the Irish Dimension' of the Northern Ireland problem, the institutionalised 'Irish Dimension' was abandoned for the fear of provoking a loyalist coup.[30] Despite the fact that the Fine Gael Labour Government stood by the Sunningdale position, it was reluctant to take the risk of a referendum which was a necessary part to any amendment to the constitution. On 29 October 1975, the Fianna Fail put forth the demand that Britain should effect 'an ordered withdrawal from her involvement in the six Counties', and promised that this demand would be supported by diplomatic and political endeavour at the United Nations, through the European institutions and appropriate international bodies.[31] But, after the party's return to power in June 1977 there were few indications that this policy was being followed.

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30. For O'Brien's statement, see Irish Times, 25 September 1974.

31. Irish Times, 30 October 1975.

On 16 June 1977 the Coalition Government of Liam Cosgrave was replaced in the General Elections by the Fianna Fail Party and John Lynch became the new Prime Minister. Though, during the election campaign the coalition Fine Gael-Labour had levelled the charge on Fianna Fail that Fianna Fail had many members who supported the IRA and that the party would involve the Irish Republic in the problems of Northern Ireland, the charge was refuted by John Lynch. Nevertheless, the defeat of Cosgrave who had supported the British policy in Northern Ireland had caused concern in Britain.

The Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, however, had made it clear before the elections on 26 May 1977, that the government would repeal the 'Emergency Act' which was promulgated after the assassination, by the IRA, of Christopher Ewart Biggs, the British ambassador to Ireland. This Emergency Act contained harsh anti-terrorist measures that were used against the IRA. John Lynch, after coming to power, urged the British Government to take initiative for a devolved form of government in Northern Ireland where power could be shared by the Protestant and Catholic communities. He also asked the American Government to put pressure on the British Government into making a declaration of intent to withdraw from Northern Ireland.[32] However, Lynch was ready for a political settlement in Northern Ireland with a power-sharing form of government

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32. O'Ballance, n. 4, p. 220.

and for which he also assured his support to the SDLP in Northern Ireland. The two Prime Ministers, John Lynch and James Callaghan, also met on 28 September 1977 in which John Lynch insisted that Callaghan should set a date for the British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.[33]

Although the call for eventual reunification was a departure from the previous Government's stance on the issue, John Lynch departed from his party's 1975 policy, which had called on Britain to declare that it would withdraw from the Province. However, David Andrews, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said on 7 November 1977:

> It has become clear that the attempted settlement of 1921 failed to solve Britain's "Irish problem" and few will deny that a problem still remains to be solved in Ireland .... The demand of the majority of the inhabitants of Ireland for recognition of their separate political identity became too emphatic for Great Britain to resist further .... Our objective is progress through reconciliation, in harmony with the mandate of an electorate which has consistently and overwhelmingly made it clear through the ballot box that the unity it aspires to is one that comes about in peace by consent and under agreed structures. (34)

At a meeting of the Fianna Fail Party Committee on Northern Ireland on 27 April 1978, Prime Minister John Lynch spoke about the growing terrorism across the border and also on the

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33. O'Ballance, n. 4, p. 221.

34. David Andrews, Address by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. David Andrews T.D., speaking on 7 November at the Cambridge Union Debate on the motion "This house believes that only a United Ireland will be a peaceful Ireland (Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 3/77).

extradition laws. He said:

> It is important to remember that many States guard the right to decide whether or not they will extradite their own nationals, irrespective of the offence of which they are accused .... In this respect, our extradition laws are more liberal than those of many European countries .... What is our position? I doubt if any country in Europe has taken as strong a stand against those who would use terror for political ends .... This country is no heaven for terrorists. (35)

When John Lynch spoke in a radio interview on 8 January 1978, that "Britain should actively encourage Irish unity, and that the Dublin Government might consider an amnesty for terrorists once the Ulster violence ended", it caused a sharp reaction among British Ministers.[36] This statement, was however, sufficient to scuffle the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason's initietive with the politicians of Northern Ireland for an "interim" return to a devolved administration in Ulster. This statement also led to the growing pressure from the Opposition politicians like Garret FitzGerald of the Fine Gael Party and Frank Cluskey of the Irish Labour Party in the Republic, to 'remove ambiguities in his remarks about a possible amnesty for provisional IRA prisoners'.[37]

On 2 May 1978, Amnesty International, made public a report by a fact finding group of Human Rights Commission of

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35. John Lynch, No Heaven for Terrorists: Speech given by the Taoiseach, Mr. John Lynch, T.D., at a meeting of the Fianna Fail Party Committee on Northern Ireland in Leinster House on Thursday, 27 April 1978 (Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 5/78).

36. The Times (London), 9 January 1978.

37. Ibid., 10 January 1978.

the World Peace Council which had visited Belfast, to investigate allegations of mal-treatment of suspects by the British Security Forces. This fact finding group which was consisted of four persons - Georges Albert Astre (France), Aikya Basil Papacostas (Greece), Lauri Hannikainen (Finland) and Chitta Biswas, Secretary of the World Peace Council from India, investigated and interviewed representatives of organizations and individuals. They found that torture was used to extract confessions from persons generally 'recognised as innocent'.[38] However, the report of the Fact Finding Committee was rejected by the British Government which said that the report represented incomplete evidence.

The situation deteriorated further when Earl Mountbatten was murdered on 27 August 1979. Following this, both Britain and Ireland pledged to adopt tough security measures that could counter the growing violence. Though, Britain felt that Ireland condemned the terrorism of IRA, it was convinced that Ireland was not doing enough to combat it. Margaret Thatcher, who came to power in Britain on 3 May 1979, came out with four proposals to strengthen the anti-terrorist campaign. They were:

(a) To allow Royal Ulster Constabulary detectives to interview the suspects held in the Irish Republic (Extradition of the suspects to Northern Ireland was considered a

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38. George Albert Astre, "British Government Violating Human Rights in Northern Ireland", New Perspective (Helsinki), vol. 8, 6/1978, pp. 20-22.

political impossibility for the Irish Government);

(b) Reorganization of the Irish police, including a special mobile force along the border;

(c) Greater Irish attention to IRA activities in other areas, such as training, bomb-making and especially bank roberies;

(d) Provide better protection for well-known Britons in the Republic.[39]

Ireland's attitude, however, was that, the anti-terrorist measures did not deal with the roots of the trouble in Northern Ireland. Speaking at a news conference on 5 September 1979, John Lynch had said, "one must get at the cause first. I believe that it will not be possible to make progress in these matters until we see some political initiative" coming from the British Government. However, earlier on 22 May 1978, there was a proposal from the leader of Opposition, Garret FitzGerald of the Fine Gael Party, that there should be a 'federation' or a confederation of Northern Ireland with Irish Republic.[40] But the Government's proposed scheme was to unify the country, and, therefore, nothing could be done on this proposal. After coming to power, Margaret Thatcher had clearly stated that she did not favour an 'Irish Dimension'. However, by this time political scene on the both sides of the Irish border worsened, as Ulster's two Big "loyalist" groups intensified their public battle over the proposed constitutional conference.

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39. International Herald Tribune (Paris), 31 August 1979.

40. O'Ballance, n. 4, p. 230.

In a Regional Conference of Fianna Fail Councillors, Michael O'Kennedy, Minister for Foreign Affairs said on 2 December 1979 that:

> All of us in Ireland are facing major challenge ... to create the condition for peace, harmonious development and prosperity on this island ... it is something which must be built, deliberately and step by step. (41)

On Irish dimension, he said:

> ... We live on one island and cannot be isolated from one another .... I believe the Irish dimension should be recognised for what it is, a positive element which can make an immense contribution to progress towards a solution. (42)

On 5 December 1979, Lynch stepped down from the premiership and was replaced by Charles Haughey. For a few weeks Lynch was under heavy criticism for making his 'mysterious' cross-border agreement with Britain.

Before assuming the Office of the Prime Minister, Charles Haughey addressed a press conference on 7 December 1979, in which he said:

> ... The Fianna Fail policy on Northern Ireland has been quite clearly enunciated in the 1975 declaration by the party and that will remain our policy. There may be perhaps differences of emphasis on particular aspects ... the thrust of our policy will be the same: the reunification of our country by peaceful means .... (43)

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41. Micheal O'Kennedy, Northern Ireland: The Irish Dimension, Address by Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, to a Regional Conference for Fianna Fail Councillors on Sunday, 2 December 1979 in Dublin (Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 5/78

42. Ibid.

43. Transcript of Press Conference given by Charles Haughey, T.D., Leader of Fianna Fail, 7 December 1979 (Embassy of Ireland, New Delhi, 1979).

When he was asked by the interviewer on his priorities after taking over the administration, he said: "I would regard the peaceful unification of the people of Ireland as my primary political priority".[44] When he was asked about his attitude towards 'power-sharing' and 'Irish dimension', he said:

> ... the '75 Fianna Fail policy Document clearly indicates this pending the withdrawal or disengagement of Britain from Irish affairs that we should pursue the peaceful coming together of the communities by means of interim institution. Any such interim institution would be welcome. (45)

However, Haughey's idea of peaceful unification of Ireland brought sharp reaction from the Loyalist Rev. Ian Paisley. He warned the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, that they would die rather than "permit" the IRA to attain "their" shared goal of an all-Ireland Republic "so long as there is a Unionist and Protestant majority in Northern Ireland".[46] Nevertheless, the secret security arrangements entered into Margaret Thatcher and John Lynch after the murder of Lord Mountbatten remained. That it was still valid was made clear by the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey in the Dail on 20 February 1980.[47]

It is pertinent to note here that Charles Haughey was able to oust John Lynch in December 1979 from the office of Prime Minister. One of the causes for the ouster was Lynch's

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44. Ibid., and also see The Times, 18 February 1980.
45. Ibid.
46. The Times, 3 March 1980.
47. Ibid., 21 February 1980.

inability to solve the internal problem of Republic of Ireland. On the other hand Charles Haughey regarded the Northern question as the most important outstanding issue.

Before the publication of British Government's White Paper, Charles Haughey, the new Premier of Irish Republic, while addressing the Ard-Fheis (annual conference) of the ruling Fianna Fail, on 16 February 1980 had said that his country and Great Britain should "face the reality that Northern Ireland, as political entity, has failed and a new beginning is needed", and that "the solution can come only through political action". He said:

> a declaration by the British Government of their interest in encouraging the unity of Ireland by agreement and in peace, would open the way towards an entirely new situation in which peace-real, lasting peace-would become an attainable reality. (48)

Subsequently, when a meeting was arranged in London on 21 May 1980 between Margaret Thatcher and Charles Haughey to discuss the problem of Northern Ireland, Haughey said that any attempt to deal with Northern Ireland's problem cannot be solved unilaterally. It is only on some new level of relationship between Britain and Ireland that a long-lasting solution can be found.[49] It is remarkable that Margaret Thatcher on this occasion failed to raise the issue that 'the future of

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48. Dail Questions addressed to the Taoiseach by Deputies Jim O'Keeffe, Garret FitzGerald, Patric D. Harte, Frank Cluskey and Michael O'Leary for answer on Wednesday, 20th February 1980 (Embassy of Ireland, New Delhi, 1980).

49. The Times, 22 May 1980.

Northern Ireland was for "no one else" outside the United Kingdom - an assurance which was made by Margaret Thatcher to the House of Commons shortly before her meeting with Charles Haughey.[50]

But, this peace plan of Haughey made little progress. Though Haughey had extended his hands of compromise and conciliation to the Unionists of Northern Ireland, he remarked that the 'minority community would never again accept second class status in their own country'.[51] However, the reconciliation approach of Haughey was thwarted following the hunger strikes in Maze prison in Northern Ireland. The provisional IRA prisoners demanded 'political status' to all the political detainees besides calling for the unification of Ireland. On 27 October 1980, some prisoners then participating in the hunger strike at the Maze prison intensified their efforts to force the authorities to grant them "special category status".[52]

In reply to a Parliamentary Question on 25 November 1980 about the hunger strike which ended on 18-19 December 1980, Prime Minister Haughey stated that:

> ... if some adjustment could be made in the prison rules themselves or in their interpretation ... a solution would be possible. The Government do not believe that political status should be an issue ... (53)

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50. Ibid.

51. The Times, 6 October 1980.

52. For details see Chapter II.

53. Press Release: Irish Government Policy on the Hunger Strike (Embassy of Ireland, New Delhi, 6 May 1981).

A meeting was arranged between Haughey and Margaret Thatcher in Dublin on 8 December 1980, which emphasised the 'unique relationship' between the two countries. For this purpose the two leaders agreed to explore, develop, and jointly study matters covering a range of issues including "new institutional structures, citizenship rights, security matters, economic co-operation and measures to encourage mutual understanding".[54]

However, the Opposition leader Garret FitzGerald (Fine Gael) expressed his discomfiture at Margaret Thatcher's remark, made during the meeting, that, "there was no possibility of a confederation between Ulster and the rest of Ireland flowing from the Dublin talks".[55] The declaration of a 'joint study group' had also led to a difference of opinion between Ulster Unionists and Margaret Thatcher.[56]

The IRA hunger strikers who had abandoned their protest, began their second round of hunger strike on 9 March 1981 to achieve their goal of 'political status'. But Thatcher Government declined to grant them 'political status' and to reach any compromise on this issue.[57] But she was quick to add that there would be no change in its constitutional status without the consent of the majority (the right of self-determination.

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54. Meeting between Taoiseach and British Prime Minister: Communique (issued by the Government Information Services, Dublin, 8 December 1980).

55. The Times, 12 December 1980.

56. Ibid., 13 December 1980.

57. Ibid., 7 March 1981.

The general election of July 1981, ousted Fianna Fail Party which was replaced by Fine Gael and Labour Party coalition with Garret FitzGerald as the Prime Minister and Michael O'Leary as the Deputy Prime Minister. The coming to power of the coalition signalled the change in Irish policy towards Northern Ireland. The coalition deemed that the Northern Ireland problem could be solved only through a step by step process. He urged the British Government to implement without delay the proposed reforms in the Maze prison. But this proposal was rejected by the British Government on 7 August 1981. However, the primary problem was not the question of British rule in Northern Ireland but the difficulty in fostering amity between the two communities. Garret FitzGerald was against the 'idea of an independent Northern Ireland. He maintained that, 'such a state would be inherently unstable and a source of insecurity to its citizens and to those of the Republic and Britain'.[58] Nevertheless, he attacked sharply the Provisional IRA, which he said was a threat to all the people of Ireland, and claimed that many people no longer wanted 'a united Ireland because of the Provisional IRA's violence'.[59]

In a Radio Telfis Eireann Radio interview on 27 September 1981 Garret FitzGerald said:

> I want to lead a crusade, a Republican crusade, to make a genuine Republic ... I am passionately

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58. Ibid., 23 September 1981.

59. Ibid.

> committed to a United Ireland, established on the principles of Tone and Davis and will try to lead our people towards that ... (60)

However, FitzGerald could not survive as Prime Minister for a long time and in February 1982 election his coalition government lost the elections and Fianna Fail again came to power. Though, on the Anglo-Irish talk a general agreement remained, Charles Haughey was much keener for the 'Parliamentary level' ... rather then just the 'ministerial and civil service' level talks on Northern Ireland issue.[61]

In a new initiative to resolve the crisis in Northern Ireland, the British Government published a new White Paper in April 1982, which emphasised a devolved form of Government for Northern Ireland. The Irish Government held the view that this 'White Paper' ignored the 'broader dimensions of the problem'. It observed:

> It is the Government's view that only policies designed to promote peace, stability and reconciliation between the two major Irish traditions, and to develop the totality of relations within these islands, can contribute to a true solution of Northern Ireland's difficulties. Such policies should be brought forward through the operation of the Anglo-Irish Inter-governmental Council and, in particular, through the role of an Anglo-Irish Parliamentary Institution in which Northern Ireland representatives participate. The fundamental objective of Government policy remains the achievement of a united Ireland by peaceful political means.(62)

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60. Garret FitzGerald, Towards A New Ireland: Transcript Extracts of interview with an Taoiseach Dr. Garret FitzGeral T.D. on R.T.E. Radio, Sunday, September 27, 1981 (Government Information Services, Dublin, 1981).

61. The Times, 29 January 1982.

62. Embassy of Ireland, New Delhi, Press Release: Irish Government statement on British Government's New White Paper on Northern Ireland, 5 April 1982.

Due to the lack of majority support in the Dail, Charles Haughey, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland had to seek re-election after a no-confidence motion was passed against him in November 1982. There was also a general feeling in Ireland that a tougher line which Haughey had adopted, could only worsen the situation and further damage the relations between the North and the South. However, Charles Haughey lost by six votes. He succeeded in getting only 80 seats out of the 166 seats in the Dail (Fianna Fail, 75; Workers Party, 2; Independent, 3). Therefore, FitzGerald and Dick Spring, from Fine Gael and Labour, respectively agreed to form a coalition government with a strength of 86 members in the Dail.

Nevertheless, the Anglo-Irish relations and Ulster problem, remained important election issues in Ireland. It is remarkable also that during the recent election campaign in 1982, both the major party leaders, Charles Haughey (Fianna Fail) and Garret FitzGerald (Fine Gael) accused each other of playing into the hands of Britain. While doing so, Charles Haughey referred to the 'famous lunch between Garret FitzGerald and the Duke of Norfolk'[63] where FitzGerald had said that James Prior's proposals were a "wonderful step forward".[64] On the other hand FitzGerald accused Charles Haughey of "adopting the tactics of the big lie" and mounting a campaign

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63. Duke of Norfolk (the Seventeenth Duke), had been head of British intelligence at the Ministry of Defence in London for some time.

64. The Times, 20 November 1982.

of "personal vilification" against him.[65] He also said that the matter discussed between him and Duke was 'the disqualification of Seamus Mallon, Deputy Leader of the SDLP from taking his seat in the Assembly' because of his membership in the Republic's Senate.[66] However, the main disputes between the two leaders were over an 'all Ireland anti-terrorist police force', and 'an all Ireland Court', which was proposed by FitzGerald, but it was rejected by Haughey.

The new Government of Garret FitzGerald with the Labour Party's support has assumed power on 14 December 1982. The new coalition Government has emphasised on Northern Ireland policy that it recognized "the aspiration to the unity of the people and territory of the island must be achieved only in peace and with the consent of a majority in both parts of the islands".[67] It also believed that the "establishment of effective devolved political institutions in Northern Ireland" with participation of both communities there and "full recognition of the Irish identity of the Nationalist section" of the population there, on par with existing recognition of the "British/Irish identity of the Unionist section of the population" was an urgent need.[68]

It is yet to be seen whether Garret FitzGerald would like to launch his second 'crusade' as he had launched at the

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65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 22 November 1982.

67. Irish Times, 13 December 1982.

68. Ibid.

and of 1981, to make the country a 'genuine Republic'. On the whole the genesis of the Northern Ireland problem can be traced to the partition of Ireland under the Act of 1920. The Ulster problem which remained a thorney problem in the Anglo-Irish relations also affected adversely stability and the law and order situation in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. For instance, the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 6 December 1921 led to the 'Civil War' (1922-23) in Ireland. However, from the very beginning, this treaty was opposed by the Fianna Fail for it was considered that it would lead to the sundering of Ireland - something which it was fighting to avoid. The dominance by one party for nearly fifty years in Northern Ireland, had alienated the Catholic community there. Protestants also believed in one party rule and its dominance over the minority community. This approach had weakened the relationship between the north and the south. Though, certain conciliatory moves were made by Terence O'Neill, the Liberal Unionist Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, through exchange of visits with Sean Lemass, the Irish Prime Minister, the conciliatory approach was gradually disintegrated after the 'Civil Rights' march of 1 January 1969.

Soon after, the Republic of Ireland took up the matter to the United Nations, and thus, the problem gained international attention. After the riot of August 1969, the Northern Ireland problem was transformed into a triangular

one involving the two parts of Ireland and Britain. Though, John Lynch's Fianna Fail Party was prepared to take advantage by sending Irish Army across the border, the end of 1970 witnessed social and economic co-operation between the north and the south through the 'functional co-operation' which was basically Sean Lemass policy. The idea behind functional co-operation was to reduce the growing tension between the north and the south.

However, the introduction of 'internment' was a setback in the north-south relations in general and Anglo-Irish in particular. The introduction of internment also marked the end of the conciliatory policy between Dublin and Belfast. The idea of functional co-operation was also shelved. The efforts of the Irish Government to internationalise this problem was partly responsible to the introduction of 'Direct Rule' in Northern Ireland in March 1972. Though, the imposition of direct rule was welcomed by Fianna Fail, they continued to call for a united Ireland.

The year 1973 saw a notable change in the attitude of Ireland towards the problem of Northern Ireland. The two notable changes of this year were: (a) the idea of creating a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland; and (b) the idea of the formation of a 'Council of Ireland', as per the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973. The power-sharing 'Executive' witnessed the end of one party rule in Northern Ireland. But, the 'Council of Ireland' which was to include

thirty members each from Dail and Northern Ireland Assembly was basically meant to improve relations between the north and the south, especially on the economic sphere. Thus, the policy of Ireland in 1973 was to emphasise on 'reconciliation' rather than 'unity'. They had realised that the process of unity could be only a gradual one and needed a step by step approach. It was also assured by the Irish Government that there would be no change in the status of Northern Ireland unless it was desired by the majority of Northern Ireland. However, a setback to the process was that the Sunningdale Agreement was never ratified. In the meantime, the opposition party in Ireland also started to step up pressures for the withdrawal of British forces from Northern Ireland.

After becoming the Prime Minister of Ireland once again in June 1977, John Lynch put forth the demand for the British withdrawal from Northern Ireland and for the end of internment. Though, he favoured a power-sharing Executive in Northern Ireland, in which both the minority and majority could participate, priority was given to the 'unification of Ireland' through peaceful means. Heavy criticism for making cross-border agreements with Britain led him to step down in July 1979. Lynch was replaced by Charles J. Haughey, a hard core politician, whose policy brought sharp reaction from the loyalists. The Irish Government believed that any problem which is discussed unilaterally is deemed to be a failure. Though, Fianna Fail condemned the means of violence adopted

by the provisionals, it could not disown the cause they advocate - the reunification of Ireland. The simple reason behind this was the fact that Fianna Fail was the political heir of Eamon de Valera and those who opposed the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921.

The Coalition Government which had opposed the idea of an independent Northern Ireland, once again came to power. The Coalition Government of FitzGerald was convinced that the launching of a 'crusade' would lead to a new Ireland. They, however, believed that unity could only be achieved gradually. Before the crusade was launched, Haughey was back to power in February 1982. During his tenure, Anglo-Irish relations deteriorated - especially during Faulkland war and when James Prior proposed an Assembly Election in October 1982 in a White Paper issued in April 1982 which omitted the "Irish Dimension".

The Anglo-Irish relations suffered another set back when Ireland opposed EEC's economic sanctions against Argentina during the Falkland war. But that was not the only factor which caused a further decline in their relations. The issues related to the creation of the Anglo-Irish governmental council was not even discussed at the inter parliamentary level. This Council which was created by British and Ireland in November 1981 was designed to be a permanent body with three tiers. However, of these three tiers only the lower two were brought into existence. Logically speaking this Council should

have had become the vanguard of reconciliation. The Opposition leader, Garret FitzGerald had said that he would press for the 'Council' to be given its political tier when the Irish Parliament returns in October 1982.

It is to be seen how far the coalition Government of FitzGerald and Dick Spring which has come to power in the election of November 1982, succeed in putting forth the demand for the 'Council' and making a 'new Ireland'. In this context what precise role the Labour Party in the coalition Government in Ireland is going to adopt is uncertain. Though the Labour Party would have greater influence on policy making, it would also have to bear the burden of an unpopular administration. Nevertheless, the need for Labour support would curtail FitzGerald's manoeuvrability.

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis shows that Northern Ireland poses a major problem for Britain. Its ill-effects permeate the very fabric of life in Northern Ireland, and, to a lesser extent, life in the United Kingdom as well. Repeated British initiatives, at times in agreement with the Irish Republic also, to tackle this problem have remained unsuccessful.

The problem of Northern Ireland is not of recent origin. One can see its origin in the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 and the Irish Free State Act of 1922 which separated Northern Ireland from the rest of Ireland and kept it as part of the United Kingdom. The province came into existence in 1921 with a separate Northern Ireland Parliament, and, since then, it enjoyed considerable autonomy in administering its internal affairs.

It may be seen that the crux of the problem of Northern Ireland is the religious antagonism of two groups of Christians - Catholics who want the unification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland and the Protestants who wants the province to remain as part of the United Kingdom. Therefore, historically, the two political traditions in Northern Ireland — nationalist or "Republican" and Unionist or 'Loyalist' — have their roots in religion.

Notably, since the very inception of a separate Parliament in Northern Ireland in 1921, it has been under the control of the Unionists, dominated by the Protestants. In fact, it was an inevitable situation since the Protestants outnumbered the Catholics in the Province in a 2:1 ratio. More over, the entire system of the Government machinery was appeared to be set up in such a way that the Catholic minority had only a marginal role to play in the administration of the Province. This situation got stabilised following the abolition of the 'Proportional Representation' system in 1929 and the adoption of the 'business premises' voting system by which the Protestants got extra voting right. At the same time little progress has been made towards the establishment of the 'Council of Ireland', composed of twenty members drawn from each parliament, mooted in the Act of 1920. As a result, for about fifty years to the Unionists stayed in power, uninterrupted in Northern Ireland.

The grievances of the Catholic minority accumulated over the years found their expression in the formation of the Civil Rights Association in 1967. From a modest beginning as a small anti-unionist middle class pressure group, Civil Rights Association grew into a mass movement. It organised several public protests and marches in Northern Ireland from August 1968 to August 1969. And, thus, the Civil Rights Movement of the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland

and the counter measures adopted by the Unionists against it had unfolded of a new explosive situation in the Province.

The increasing strength of the Civil Rights Movement and the riots of 1969 evoked quick reaction in London. Apprehending that the riots might lead to a 'civil war' situation in the Province, Britain quickly despatched troops to Northern Ireland to quell the riots. However, the troops were not quite successful in their mission and the situation took a turn for the worse. Sensing escalation of tension the Conservative Government of Britain in March 1972, brought the administration of the Province under 'Direct Rule' from Westminster. To mollify the feelings of the Catholics, the British Parliament passed the Northern Ireland Constitution Act of 1973. This Act provided for the creation of a power-sharing government for Northern Ireland that was to be formed out of a 78 member Assembly to be elected by Proportional Representation. But the solution turned out to be a short-lived one. Just five months after the power-sharing government was formed on 1 January 1974, it collapsed under the weight of a mass "Loyalist" strike. As a result, the Province was brought back under the 'Direct Rule'. The Labour Government's initiative in May 1975 to solve the problem through a Constitutional Convention also did not yield any result. Similar was the fate of the initiative the British Government had taken in November 1977 to provide a framework for a

form of devolution for Northern Ireland. When the Conservative Government came to power in 1979, Humphrey Atkins, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, held a Conference of four main political parties of the Province in January 1980. The purpose of the Conference was to find out ways and means to transfer power from Westminster to locally elected representatives. This effort also failed. As a result, the 'Direct Rule' in Northern Ireland continued.

Therefore, it is clear that since the introduction of the 'Direct Rule', successive governments in the United Kingdom had made serious efforts to promote agreement among the political parties in Northern Ireland in order to enable the formation of a government which would be acceptable to the major communities in the Province. The latest initiative from the British Government was to establish an Assembly for Northern Ireland in which both the majority and the minority could participate. Though the Assembly has assumed functioning after an election on 20 October, 1982, the boycott of the new Assembly by the two Catholic dominated political parties — SDLP and Sinn Fein — has made its prospects dim.

The attitude of the political parties in Northern Ireland, and Britain as well, towards this problem has been remarkable. The first notable change occurred in the Unionist Party itself in 1969. The 'reformation programme', which was introduced in 1968, led a split in the Unionists.

Those who opposed this programme (William Craig and Rev. Ian Paisley) were labelled as extremists and those who favoured its implementation (Terence O'Neill and Chichester Clark) were called liberals. The delay in its implementation spurred violence in Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, the IRA, which split in late 1969 into two wings — 'Provisionals' and 'Officials', took an active part in violence.

The deteriorating situation in Northern Ireland led to the imposition of 'Direct Rule' from Westminster. This caused discontentment among the Unionist and the 'Loyalists' in Northern Ireland. They feared that the imposition of Direct Rule may lead to the unification of Ireland. On the other hand the Catholics in Northern Ireland were happy at the fall of the Unionists from power after nearly fifty years of rule. They also hoped that Stormont would never again be revived. Thus, it gave full support to the imposition of 'Direct Rule'. The major political parties in Britain have adopted, by and large, a consensus approach towards the problem of Northern Ireland. They abhorred violence and wanted a peaceful solution on the basis of the wishes of the local population. As a viable solution they favoured a Power-Sharing Executive for Northern Ireland where the majority and the minority could take part in the administration. They also followed an agreed approach in dealing terrorism and violence unleashed by the Provisional IRA and other extremist elements in the Province and decided not to

succumb to their violent pressure tactics. This attitude has been hardened after the IRA escalated its violence to the mainland of Britain and made well-known personalities like Lord Mountbatten their victims.

In any study on Northern Ireland, the attitude of the Republic of Ireland assumes special significance. The Government of Ireland took active interest in the problem following the serious riots which took place in 1969 in Northern Ireland. Its initial attempt was to internationalise the problem by raising it in the United Nations and also by requesting the organisation to send peace-keeping forces to Northern Ireland. Being a Catholic ruled State, Ireland's sympathy was with the Catholic minority in Northern Ireland and its aspirations to join the Republic. It is interesting to note that prior to the 1969 riots, the Irish Government's relationship with Northern Ireland was based on 'functional co-operation'. But, this functional co-operation policy of the Republic of Ireland was shelved until 1970.

When violence errupted once again in Northern Ireland in 1971, followed by the introduction of internment in August 1971, the Government of Ireland made it clear that it would not interfere in the affairs of Northern Ireland. Besides, it also denounced violence and terrorism which were going on in the Province. Nevertheless, Dublin took a serious note of the introduction of internment since it feared that

the introduction of internment would do harm to the minority community in Northern Ireland. However, the Republic of Ireland continued its call for a united Ireland and welcomed the imposition of 'Direct Rule', when the coalition government of Fine Gael and Labour Party came to power on 14 March 1973. At the tripertite talks held at Sunningdale in December 1973, the 'Irish Dimension' of the problem was recognised and for the first time an agreement was reached on the establishment of a 'Council of Ireland', with the main objective to improve relations between the north and the south, particularly in the economic sphere. It was envisaged to include 30 members each from the Dail and Northern Ireland Assembly. But unfortunately the 'Council of Ireland' never came into existence. The coalition Government of Fine Gael and Labour Party gave greater emphasis on 'reconciliation' rather than 'unity', although 'unity' was also equally important for them. They believed that unity could be achieved only through a step by step approach.

Under the Premiership of Charles Haughey, who became Prime Minister in 1979, the Republic of Ireland's attitude towards Northern Ireland had undergone notable change. His Government emphasised that there could be no unilaterel solution for the problem of Northern Ireland. But the coalition government, which assumed office in July 1981, believed that the problem of Northern Ireland could be solved

through reconciliation. However, it is worthwhile to note that both the major parties of the Republic of Ireland condemn violence and believes that only a united Ireland can bring peace to Ireland.

Perhaps, the change of government in Ireland in December 1982 following the general elections, and the formation of a new Fine Gael - Labour Coalition Government under the leadership of Garret FitzGerald could mark a new phase in the relationship between Ireland and Britain and also between the two parts of Ireland. As a known opponent of terrorism, FitzGerald's assumption as Prime Minister might result in greater and more meaningful cooperation between London and Dublin to combat terrorism in Northern Ireland and also to find a peaceful solution to the problem.

Some Unionist politicians like Rev. Ian Paisley and John Taylor have spoken also in favour of an 'Independent Northern Ireland' as a solution. But, the provisional IRA has made it clear that it was totally opposed to an independent Northern Ireland. And apart from the Provisionals, many moderate Irishmen might also oppose the establishment of any Protestant dominated independent Northern Ireland, free from Britain's moderating influence.

Since the British Government has taken the basic position that there could be no change of borders in Northern Ireland without the consent of the majority in the Province,

a line supported by Ireland too, and since the Provisional IRA, knowing fully well that the majority would not consent it, has vowed to force the merger of North with the South through terrorist methods, this problem is likely to remain a major challenge to the skills of British statesmen for quite some time.

Appendix I

General Elections in Northern Ireland, 1921-69

Date	Unionist	Ind. Unionist	Lib.	Lab.	Ind.	Nat.	Eire Rep. Soc. Ind.	Lab. Lab. Lab.	Sinn Fein abstention	For Union	Anti Partition
24 May 1921	40	-	-	-	-	6	-		6	40	12
28 April 1925	33	3	-	3	1	10	-		2	40	12
22 May 1929	37	3	-	1	-	10	-		1	41	11
30 Nov.1933	36	2	-	2	1	9	-		2	41	11
9 Feb.1938	39	3	-	1	-	8	1		-	43	9
14 June 1945	33	2	-	2	3	9	3		-	40	12
10 Feb.1949	37	2	-	-	2	9	2		-	41	11
22 Oct.1953	38	1	-	-	1	7	3		2	40	12
20 March'58	37	-	-	4	1	8	2		-	42	10
31 May 1962	34	-	1	4	1	9	3		-	40	12
25 Nov.1965	36	-	1	2	2	9	2		-	41	11
24 Feb.1969	36	3	-	2	3	6	2		-	40	12

Source: David Butler and Anne Sloman, British Political Facts, 1900-1975 (London, 1975), p. 353.

APPENDIX II

POPULATION, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION FIGURES IN CERTAIN AREAS FROM WHICH COMPLAINTS WERE RECEIVED

Local Area Authority	Population Census 1961					Population Census 1966 (Religion not Recorded)		Council Representation as on 30.9.68		Housing built since 1.6.1944 by local authorities and Northern Ireland Housing Trust as at 30.9.1968	Housing Approved by 30.9.1968 but not yet Started	Housing being built at 30.9.1968
	All Persons	Total R.C.	Total Others	Adult R.C.	Adult Others	Total	Adults	Non-Unionists	Unionists			
Armagh	10,062	5,881	4,881	3,139	2,798	10,977	6,185	8	12	1,334	0	77
Dungannon U.D.C.	6,511	3,276	3,235	1,845	2,041	7,335	4,276	7	14	901	0	20
Dungannon R.D.C.	25,713	13,393	12,320	7,329	7,476	26,080	14,820	6	13 (Plus 3 co-opted members)	1,277	115	32
Fermanagh Co. Council	51,531	27,442	24,109	15,884	15,222	49,886	29,910	17	33 (Plus 2 co-opted members)	2,176	208	109
Londonderry Co.Borough	53,762	36,073	17,689	18,432	11,340	55,694	30,106	8	12	3,887	66	218
Newry UDC	12,429	10,414	2,015	5,843	1,364	12,208	7,007	12	6	1,855	104	126
Omagh U.D.C.	8,109	4,960	3,149	2,605	1,949	9,989	5,572	9	12	897	45	19

Source: Cmnd. 532 (1969), p. 57.

Appendix III

Members of the Northern Ireland Government, March 1972

Brian Faulkner,	Prime Minister
John Andrews,	Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Grey,	Governor
Herbie Kirk,	Minister of Finance
John Brooke,	Minister of State at Finance
Pat Minford,	Minister of State at Development
William Long,	Minister of Education
Basil McIvor,	Minister of Community Relations
Basil Kelly,	Attorney-General
Sir Harold Black,	Secretary of the Cabinet and Clerk of the Privy Council
William Fitzsimmons,	Minister of Health and Social Services
Robin Bailie,	Minister of Commerce
Harry West,	Minister of Agriculture
Roy Bradford,	Minister of Development
G.B. Newe,	Minister of State (Prime Minister's Office)
Ken Bloomfield,	Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet

Source: Brian Faulkner, ed., Memoirs of a Statesman (London, 1978), p. 299.

Appendix IV

The Leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party, 1886 - 1972

(Colonel) Edward James Saunderson, 1886-1906.

Right Honourable Walter H. Long, 1906-1910.
(created Viscount Long of Waraxall, 1921)

Sir Edward Carson, 1910-1921.
(created Lord Carson of Duncairn, 1921)

*Sir James Craig, 1921-1940.
(created Viscount Craigavon of Stormont, 1926)

* John Miller Andrews, 1940-1943.

* Sir Basil Brooke, 1943-1963.
(created Viscount Brookeborough, 1952)

* (Captain) Terence O'Neill, 1963-1969.
(created Lord O'Neill of the Maine, 1970)

* Major James Dawson Chichester Clark, 1969-1971.
(created Viscount Moyola, 1971)

* Arthur Brian Deane Faulkner, 1971-1972.

Source: John F. Harbinson, The Ulster Unionist Party, 1882-1973: Its Development and Organisation (Belfast, 1974), revd. edn., pp. 129-165.

* Northern Ireland Prime Ministers from 1921-1972.

Appendix V

The 11 Members of the Secretary of State's Advisory Commission, Appointed, 25.5.1972

Tom Conety	Businessman and Chairman of the Central Citizens Defence Committee.
A.E. Gibson	Past President of the Ulster Farmers' Union.
Prof. N. Gibson	Professor of Economics, New University of Ulster, Coleraine, Co. Londonderry.
Norman Kennedy	Chairman of the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.
Sir Robin Kinahan	Banker and Vice-President of the Confederation of British Industry, a former Lord Mayor of Belfast.
Mrs. Ada Malone	Headmistress of Enniskillen Collegiate School for Girls.
Miss Sheelagh Murnaghan:	Barrister and former MP for Queen's University, Belfast.
John Nicholl	Chairman of the North-West panel of the Local Enterprise Development Unit and Vice-Chairman of Derry County Council.
James O'Hagan	Solicitor and member of the Housing Executive, former member of Northern Ireland Housing Trust and a member of the Council of the Law Society for Northern Ireland.
R.B. Price	President of the Association of Local Authorities of Northern Ireland.
R.D. Rolston	President of the Northern Ireland Regional Council of the Confederation of British Industry and a member of the Police Authority of Northern Ireland.

Source: Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland 1968-73: A Chronology of Events, vol. 2, 1972-73 (Belfast, 1974), p. 372.

Appendix VI

The Northern Ireland Executive in 1974

Members of the Power-Sharing Executive Comprised 11 Members as Follows

t Hon Brian Faulkner	Chief Minister (Unionist)
r Gerard Fitt	Deputy Chief Minister (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
r Oliver J Napier	Legal Minister and Head of the Office of Law Reform (Alliance)
r John Lawson Baxter	Minister of Information (Unionist)
t Hon Roy H Bradford	Minister of the Environment (Unionist)
r J Austin Currie	Minister of Housing, Local Government and Planning (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
r Patrick J Devlin	Minister of Health and Social Services (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
r John Hume	Minister of Commerce (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
t Hon Herbert V Kirk	Minister of Finance (Unionist)
t Hon W Basil McIvor	Minister of Education (Unionist)
r Leslie J Morrell	Minister of Agriculture (Unionist)

he Administration

The Administration comprised the 11 members of the xecutive plus the following:

r Ivan Cooper	Minister of Community Relations (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
r Robert G Cooper	Minister of Manpower Services (Alliance)

Major Lloyd Hall Thompson	Chief Whip (Unionist)
Mr Edward Kevin McCrady	Minister of Planning and Co-ordination (Social Democratic and Labour Party)
Mr Basil Glass	Deputy Chief Whip (Alliance)

Source: Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland 1968-73: A Chronology of Events, vol. 2, 1972-73 (Belfast, 1974), p. 376.

Appendix VII

Fine Gael and Labour Coalition Cabinet, March 1973 in the Republic of Ireland

Liam Cosgrave	Prime Minister (Fine Gael)
Brendan Corish	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Social Welfare (Labour)
Ministers	
Patrick Donegan	Defence (Fine Gael)
James Tully	Local Government (Labour)
Richie Ryan	Finance (Fine Gael)
Mark Clinton	Agriculture and Fisheries (Fine Gael)
Garret FitzGerald	Foreign Affairs (Fine Gael)
Michael O'Leary	Labour (Labour)
Tom O'Donnell	Irish Language speaking Areas (Fine Gael)
Conor Cruise O'Brien	Posts and Telegraphs, including RTE (Labour)
Justin Keating	Industry and Commerce (Labour)
Peter Barry	Transport and Power (Fine Gael)
Richard Burke	Education (Fine Gael)
Patrick Cooney	Justice (Fine Gael)
Declan Costello	Attorney General (Fine Gael)

Source: Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland 1968-73: A Chronology of Events, vol. 2, 1972-73 (Belfast, 1974), p. 379.

Appendix VIII

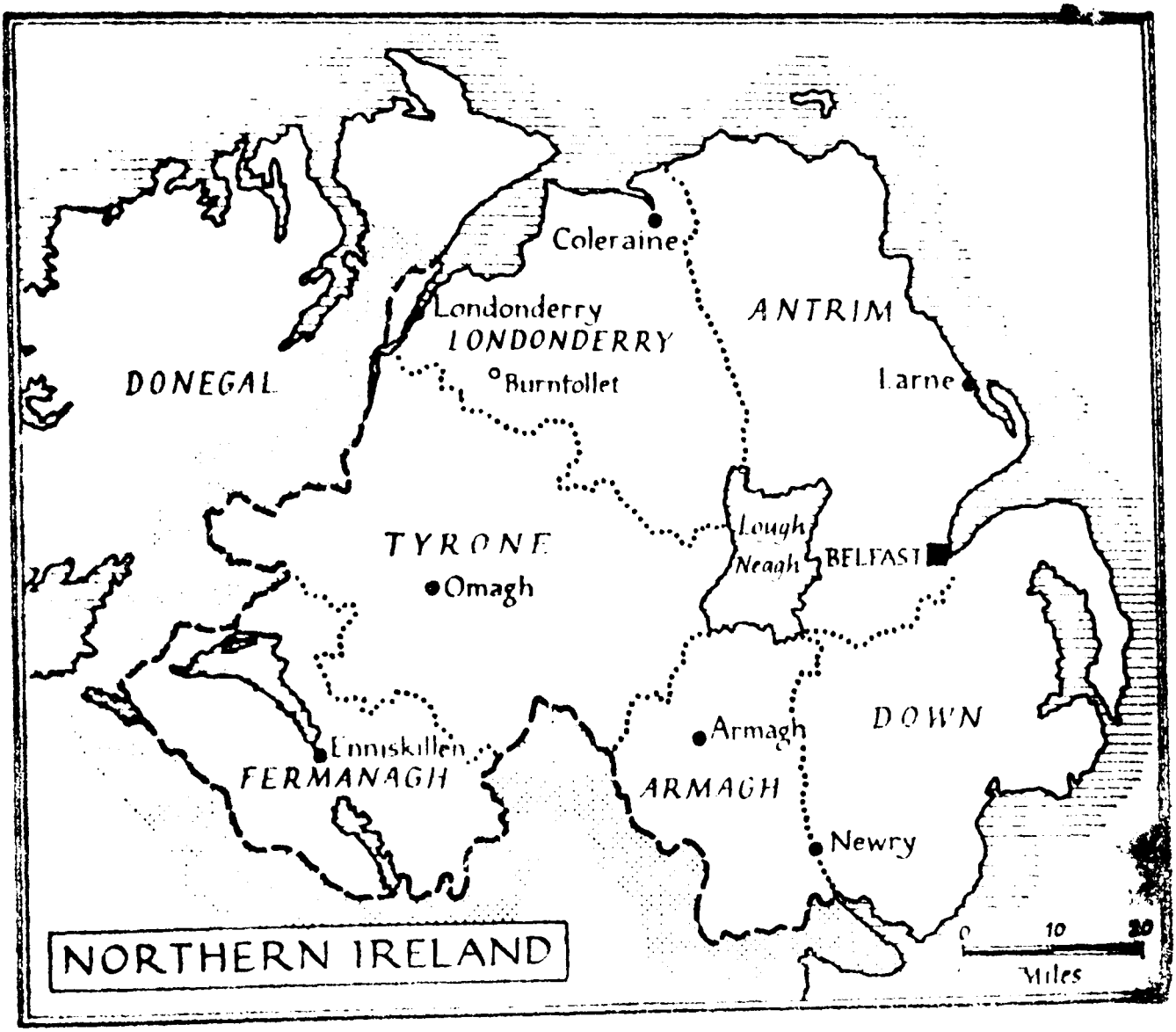
General Elections for the British Parliament in Westminster 28.2.1974. Members Elected from Northern Ireland

Ulster Vanguard, the Democratic Unionist Party and the Official Unionist Party (anti Sunningdale, led by Mr. Harry West M.P.) fought the elections under the banner of a coalition: The United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC).

*William Craig	East Belfast, UUUC
*John Carson	North Belfast, UUUC
*Rev Robert Bradford	South Belfast, UUUC
James Molyneaux	South Antrim, UUUC
*Harold McCusker	Armagh, UUUC
*John Dunlop	Mid-Ulster, UUUC
James Kilfedder	North Down, UUUC
Captain Lee Orr	South Down, UUUC
Rev Ian Paisley	North Antrim, UUUC
*Harry West	Fermanagh and South Tyrone, UUUC
*William Ross	Londonderry, UUUC
Gerard Fitt	West Belfast, SDLP

Source: Richard Deutsch and Vivien Magowan, Northern Ireland 1968-73: A Chronology of Events, vols 2, 1972-73 (Belfast, 1974), p. 379.

* New member at Westminster.


Coleraine
Londonderry
LONDONDERRY
ANTRIM
DONEGAL
Burntollet
Larne
TYRONE
Lough Neagh
BELFAST
Omagh
Armagh
DOWN
Enniskillen
FERMANAGH
ARMAGH
Newry
0 10 20
Miles
NORTHERN IRELAND

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